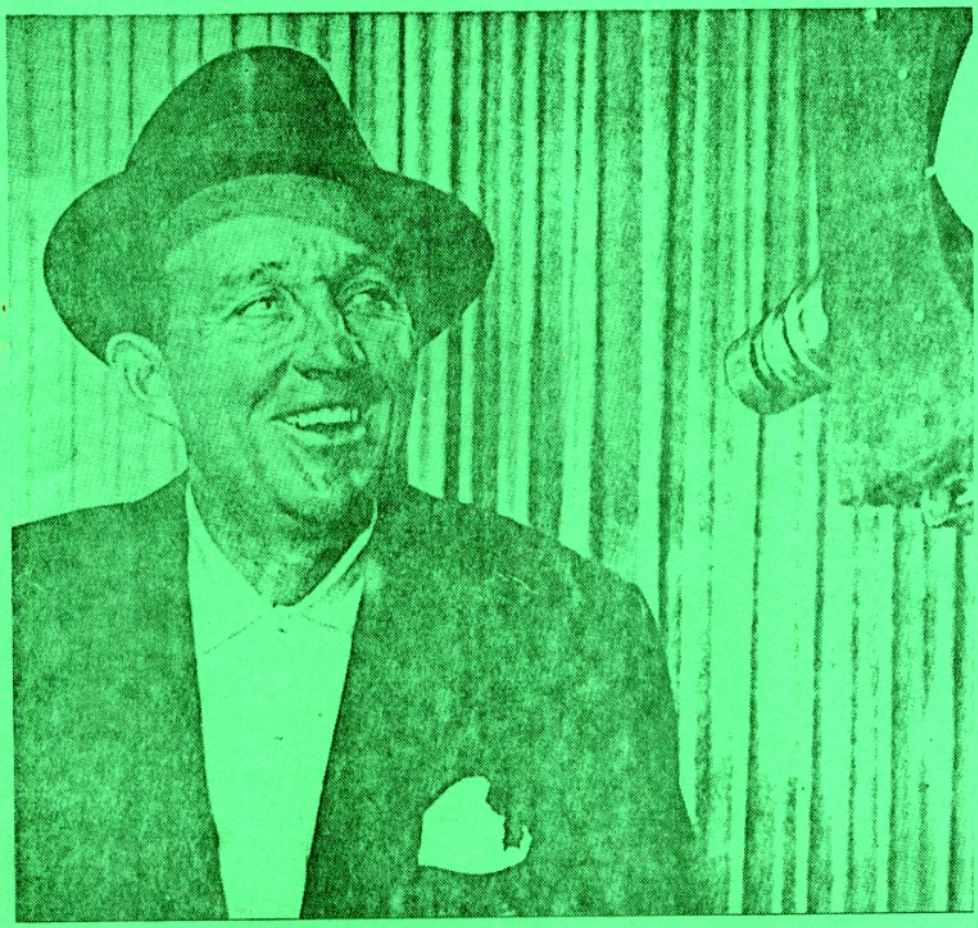
Newsweek

Good and Bad—Shape of the New Year

(See Special 1954 Section)

JANUARY 4, 1954 20c



Crosby on TV: A Lingering Farewell?

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HELLO AGAIN,

Or perhaps I should say "Hello **at last**"!

Our last issue was dated February, this one is dated **September**. I'm afraid that there's a simple reason for the delay - pressure of work. As I wrote earlier, I now work as a freelance copywriter (in the advertising industry) and I have simply been inundated with work. I literally work from morning to night (and often at weekends) and I have not had the time until now to sit down and spend the time it takes to put these things together properly.

Thank you to all those members who wrote saying that they would be happy with three issues of the Crosby Voice. I hope that I can make it that many this year!

To make up for the long drought, here is the biggest, thickest issue of the magazine that we have ever produced. Seventy pages in all. You'll notice that it has a slightly different look. That's because I have purchased a word processor which can do all sorts of clever tricks like making words **BOLD** like that or even 'justify' type. That is, make it spread evenly from one side of the page to the other. Some pages in this issue have been 'justified', others have not. I'll see which looks better when it's done.

The word processor also has an automatic spelling checker. If it finds a word that is not programmed into its 'dictionary', it helpfully suggests an alternative. Obviously, 'Bing Crosby' is not in the list and so the first time round, the machine offered up 'BIG CRISPY'. Fortunately, I can add words so that problem went away!

The front of this issue features the cover of Newsweek magazine from January of 1954 when Bing was taking his first tentative steps into TV. We lead off with the full article on page 3.

Although there have been no further issues to date in the Chronological Crosby series, there have been some remarkable releases. Would you believe two radio tracks featuring the Rhythm Boys from early 1930?! See page 7.

We recently picked up some advertising material for Bing's 1937 movie Waikiki Wedding. One ad is on page 15, the rest later in the magazine.

'Crosby Profiles' this issue are minus (in two cases) the usual photographs. This is because I mixed the pictures up and don't know who's who! Next issue, with a little help, you'll see the appropriate shots.

Channel 2 recently screened the first four 'Road' pictures. Nice to get them minus commercials.

We finally drew the winners in our international raffle for two copies of Tim Morgereth's book. The lucky people were Marjorie DeRyk (Australia) and Malcolm MacFarlane (UK). Thanks to everyone who purchased tickets.

On page 43, we reprint part of a chapter called "Bing, the Chairman and the King" from a book called "Rock Eras - Interpretations of Music and Society 1954-1984" by Jim Curtis, Bowling Green State University Popular Press, Ohio. A fascinating book. Well worth reading if you can get a copy.

This issue, we start a new feature I've called 'BING'S SERMONS'. As part of his daily radio show in the mid-50's, Bing delivered a two or three minute discourse on things that interested or concerned him. I think that these were Bing's own words. We end the magazine with Bing's thoughts on the TV coverage of the 1955 Academy Awards.

That's all I have room for! Happy reading.

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FUTURE FUNCTIONS

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MONDAY OCTOBER 24TH - AGM + FILM EVENING

We'll be screening three items:

The conclusion (at last!) of CHECK AND DOUBLE CHECK

Bing's 1964 TV Special ROAD TO LEBANON

Bing's 1933 movie: GOING HOLLYWOOD

MONDAY DECEMBER 5TH - FILM EVENING

For our final meeting of the year, we've lined up:

BING'S FINAL CHRISTMAS TV SPECIAL FROM 1977

and his 1936 movie RHYTHM ON THE RANGE

ALL THE DATES FOR 1989

Note these in your diary now:

FEBRUARY 27, APRIL 24, JUNE 26, AUGUST 14, OCTOBER 23 and DECEMBER 11.

First up for the new year we'll be screening RHYTHM ON THE RIVER

Also planned for showing during 1988 are Bing's Mack Sennett shorts, The Big Broadcast of 1936 and a couple of all star British specials from the early 1930s - Elstree Calling and Friday 13th (not to be confused with the recent series of films!).

Venue for all functions will again be the theatrette of the AMP building, corner Bourke and William Streets in the city.

Starting time is 7.30 sharp, but many people prefer to arrive around 7.00, because they get any new records that have come in!

With the agreement of all concerned, we've decided to raise entry costs by $1.00, simply because everything is costing more these days.

The new charges:

Members: $5
Pensioners and Students: $3
Non-members: $6

His first full-fledged TV show: Bing dances into the living room—and sings as he's always sung

With $15,000,000, Bing Wants to Slowly Bow Out

On Stage Three of the General Service Studios in Hollywood, two middle-aged men in heavy make-up exchanged small talk in front of a camera. "I wish I had your money," said one. "I wish you had it, too. It would be safer with you," the other replied.

A quiet semicircle of gagmen, network executives, agents, cameramen, and make-up men massed around the klieg-lighted set smiled. One of their number, a CBS-TV vice president named Harry Ackerman, smiled with considerably more satisfaction than the others.

For two years, Ackerman had been negotiating with Bing Crosby (see cover), trying to talk him into his full-fledged television debut. Repeatedly, he had been put off: Crosby was occupied with other matters—ranching, golf, the educations of his four sons, the illness and subsequent death of his wife in November of '52, trips to Europe, movies, and his radio show. Not that Crosby was uninterested but, he insisted, he was "too busy."

Just Like Lucy: Once he quietly visited the set where I Love Lucy was being filmed and confided, afterward, to Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz: "When I go into TV, this is how I'll do it—on film." There were other times when, as if dipping a toe into unfamiliar waters, Crosby had appeared briefly before the iconoscope's electronic eye—a charity telethon with sidekick Bob Hope; on one of Hope's TV shows; and last February, on the Joan Davis show, which is sponsored by the General Electric Co., Crosby's radio sponsor as well. In the Crosby self-kidding tradition, the script took note of the Groaner's reluctance to plunge into TV. As he sauntered onstage, Joan Davis gasped: "You're not . . . Oh, no, he wouldn't be on television. Too fat for it. Too slow."

Mona Freeman might say "yes"

Now Ackerman's big moment had come. Outside the sound stage, a studio policeman stood guard to keep out intruders; signs had been posted warning that it was a "Closed Set." But the word was out. Crosby was filming his first TV show, and the curious trickled through the barriers. And both Crosby and his guest star, a "39-year-old" comedian named Jack Benny, brought their retinues of friends and advisers.

Looking Good: Between scenes, while writer-producer Bill Morrow, a nine-year veteran with Crosby, and previously a Benny gagman for eight years, dictated fresh dialogue to a battery of secretaries, Crosby shadowboxed, hummed, or wisecracked with Benny. "I'll be bowing up and down like a jackass in the thistle," he characterized one scene, in the racy hyperbole that is his

The big Crosby home in Holmby Hills (Los Angeles) will soon be sold

conversational trademark. After another scene, it was Benny's turn: "Bing and I are happy the young entertainers are coming up slowly." The two veterans discussed toupees. Crosby was wearing one; Benny wasn't. "This is Bing's show," said Benny. "Let him look good. When he comes on my show, I'll make him take off the toupee and I'll wear it." Crosby, Benny said, will appear on his program "as soon as I get the right idea. I figure I've got him in my pocket." Their appearances on one another's shows will represent what the trade calls a "talent swap," with no money changing hands.

TV viewers tuned to CBS Sunday evening, Jan. 3, will hear nothing new in the Crosby voice and see nothing new in the Crosby repertoire. But that, his fans probably will agree, is just the way it should be. Except for an opening ("standup") monologue and one dance number, Bing sings, exchanges gags (about golf, money, and a dumb blonde played by dancer Sheree North) with Benny in the tried-and-true Crosby radio formula. The difference will be that the Crosby charm and the Crosby manner will appear in the nation's living rooms. Since TV's beginnings as a barroom novelty, that prospect has appealed to network and advertising-agency executives. Like Crosby-and-Hope, Crosby-and-golf, Crosby-and-money, Crosby-on-TV has loomed as a natural.

The trick, however, will be to keep Crosby on TV. He has strong objections to too-frequent appearances. "I've always felt television is just like movies, but it's in the home. I wouldn't want to be in anybody's home too often, and you wouldn't want to see a movie starring the same person every week." He feels performers should limit their TV appearances to no more than six or seven times a year. Of his own plans, he is vague. One thing is certain, nonetheless: He will film his second TV show in March, for Easter release.

There is, Crosby's closest associates feel, more than an anxiety about TV in his refusal to commit himself. They believe the entertainer wants gradually to slip out of the spotlight, as quietly and smoothly as possible. Bill Morrow, a Crosby crony as well as his writer-producer, believes so. "He seems to indicate that he will gradually retire," Morrow says. "If this way of doing TV is successful, he'll do a little TV. I doubt whether he'll resign completely. He'll go into something; he's too energetic. It might be outdoor stuff, rather than a lot of conferences in smoky rooms."

John O'Melveny, Crosby's attorney and chief business adviser, also feels that the Crooner "plans to taper off, from now on. That's what he and I are working toward, his gradual retirement. That's what he wants to do. We've worked out trust funds for the children. Dixie's gone. He's got plenty of money. He wants to work a little and play a little. I don't feel he's enthusiastic about continuing much longer on radio. He'd like to continue making pictures, once in a while."

Oil and Toys! At 49, Harry Lillis Crosby is unique among ranking American entertainers in that he feels no strong compulsion to keep his name in lights. He is, as everyone knows, a wealthy man. He is worth about $15,000,000. Today, the sources of his wealth are many, and relatively few have any connection with Crosby the entertainer. These interests range from oil fields to toy dogs. Crosby, the entertainer, is a minor part of Crosby, the corporate man:

▶His principal source of income is oil, with his principal production (in partnership with Bob Hope and oilman Monty Monerief) in Scurry County, Texas.

▶The Bing Crosby Minute Maid Distributing Co. controls distribution of the Minute Maid brand of frozen fruit juices in five Western states. A golf-links conversation with John Hay Whitney induced Crosby to buy 20,000 shares of Minute Maid at 10 cents each; to pro-

Bing takes care of his boys: Dennis, Lindsay, Philip, and Gary

Larry goes for gadgets, Bob and daughter Cathy sing, and Everett minds the money

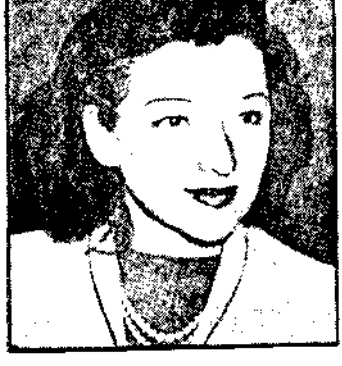
mote the product, he did eighteen months of radio shows. Minute Maid now grosses more than $36,000,000 a year, and Crosby's Western distribution rights grossed over $3,000,000 in the first nine months of 1953.

▶Bing Crosby Ice Cream Sales, Inc., is a new venture, less than a year old. A special interest of his brother Everett, the persuasive ex-truck salesman who is Bing's longtime business manager, it licenses the use of Crosby's name in national advertising of ice cream.

▶Bing Crosby Enterprises, Inc., housed in the three-story Crosby Building on Hollywood's Sunset Boulevard, is an astonishing complex of Crosby investments. Organized in 1946 "to pick up a lot of money that was going other places," as O'Melveny puts it, it was the first of the "movie-star corporations." Its Electronics Division now grosses $1,500,000 a year as West Coast distributor of Ampex tape-recording equipment, including Ampex's latest gadget: an "automatic radio station." (Back in 1946, when Crosby broke network precedent by winning the right to transcribe his radio show, he helped finance the struggling Ampex Electric Corp. of Redwood City, Calif.) The Electronics Division's biggest business these days, according to Frank Healey who runs it, is in telemetering instruments for guided-missile and aircraft projects, many of them secret. The division is also the Western distributor of instrumentation tape for the Minnesota Mining & Manufacturing Co., a $350,000 sideline.

▶Bing Crosby Enterprises' TV Film Production Division is the brain child of brother Everett, who saw a lush field in TV for filmed dramatic programs. It has produced some 150 films—including the Fireside Theater series, originally made for the Procter & Gamble Co., but now on its second and third showings—for a total gross of $2,500,000. Six more films are currently in production.

▶Bing Crosby Enterprises also produces Crosby's radio shows, by arrangement with CBS and General Electric, both of which have separate contracts with Crosby. It also will produce his future television programs. And it produces every other Crosby movie, under his seven-year Paramount contract (which has still two years to run) which alternates between: (1) Crosby's own productions, distributed by Paramount, and (2) Paramount-produced Crosby films, in which the star gets a flat sum plus a percentage of the profits. This week Boxoffice, trade paper of the theater operators, disclosed that its poll of theatermen had named Crosby as their No. 2 favorite in 1953, second to Gary Cooper. He played first in every Boxoffice poll from 1944 to 1951, second in 1952. His next film, "Country Girl," based on Clifford Odets's Broadway drama.



Dixie Crosby

▶The Decros Corp. is a partnership between Crosby and Decca Records in his recordings started in 1947. Unfortunately for him, it does not include Crosby's biggest hit, the perennial "White Christmas," which already has sold more than 8,000,000 copies, or his three other Christmas "standards"—"Silent Night," "Adeste Fideles," and "Jingle Bells"—a trio with a total of 20,000,000 sales.

▶As an individual, Crosby owns his Elko, Nev., ranch with its 18,000 acres on which he runs 4,500 head of cattle.

▶He is a minor investor ($2,000) in a much-publicized venture of his oldest brother, Larry, the Crosby Research Foundation. Larry, 57, and a grandfather, is a former Tacoma and Spokane newspaper and advertising man, who also handles Bing's public relations. He lives near Bing in posh Holmby Hills in Los Angeles. The institute promotes and endorses (with its own seal of approval) gadgets and inventions Larry deems worth-while—"some 50 out of 1,000,000 submitted," he estimates. Among its projects since 1941: a submarine detector, a deodorant, a plastic raincoat. His latest: Hydrosulphosol, a burn remedy which, he says, has had notable success in curing certain eye injuries.

▶Bing's Things, Inc., is a revived venture, after one false start, which this Christmas began marketing a toy dog based on the dog, Binkie, in Crosby's film, "Little Boy Lost," and a game titled "Call Me Lucky." Crosby-Jayson, Inc., another Crosby venture has been marketing the "Bing Crosby Casual Shirt" for some years; it is described as a "very profitable venture."

▶The Crosby Investment Corp. holds in trust investments (securities, bonds, and some real estate) for the four Crosby sons. Little is said about this trust, except

that it is "the Crosby boys' nest egg."

There are, and have been, other Crosby investments. In the opinion of O'Melveny, a shrewd, genial man of 59 who heads one of the two biggest West Coast law firms (61 lawyers), "he also gets mixed up in other things. People surround him and talk him into these things." Among them: 20 per cent of the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball club; the Del Mar race track (Crosby bought stock at $100 a share; O'Melveny later sold it for him at $500 a share); 25 per cent of the KMBY radio and TV stations in Monterey, Calif.; and, until it was recently sold for $1,175,000, an interest in KXLY, a TV station in Spokane.

No one, least of all Crosby, who titled his recent autobiography "Call Me Lucky," credits the Groaner with the golden touch. "I have nothing to do with the oil business," he says. "Jack O'Melveny takes care of all investments. But the ranch, the Pebble Beach golf tournament, and my personal affairs I handle myself." Wherever he goes, Crosby lugs a portable Dictaphone. "There's correspondence every day. And there are always phone calls." His ranch foreman comes to Los Angeles every five weeks. The day-to-day management of the multitudinous Crosby Enterprises is left to a quadrumvirate—O'Melveny, tax attorney Todd Johnson, Basil Grillo, the TV film division's executive producer, and Everett Crosby. Everett now spends most of his time at the New York Crosby office (600 Fifth Avenue) or at his Dutchess County, N.Y., farm.

Easy Does It Never a man for details, Crosby's role as a tycoon rests lightly upon his shoulders. The fame that (he has always maintained) came to him so easily has always troubled him, lest the job of maintaining it overwhelm his enjoyment of life.

Nowadays, his friends say, he wants plenty of time for the things he most enjoys—working on the ranch, golf, hunting and fishing, the company of close and convivial friends. Above all else, he demands privacy, surrendering it under protest and then only in small gasps—like a man swimming under water too long. Because, he has confided to intimates, Europeans respect his privacy more than Americans, he has developed a crush on Europe—and singing "I Love Paris" on his first TV show was more than recognition of a hit tune. In Paris last summer, he, his son Lindsay, and pal Morrow lived in "a place with a garden" on the Left Bank, dining unrecognized in the little restaurants of the Latin Quarter.

The Crosby of years past, who reveled in late-hour conviviality, has given way to a tanned, fit, middle-aged man who drinks sparingly and goes to bed early most evenings. "I found I drank to keep awake," he said recently. "Now I get to bed at 10 o'clock."

Since the death of his wife, he is increasingly concerned with the upbringing of his four sons. Sitting in his dressing room between TV scenes, Crosby said: "This is a critical time in the lives of the kids, especially the three oldest boys. They require an increasing amount of attention. Now that their mother's gone, there's just a housekeeper at home. They have to be checked in at night. You have to know what they're doing, where they're going. The next three, four years are very important. They're normal, active young men, and if you don't take care of them, they might get in trouble."

Bing's Biggest Movie Grosses*

"The Bells of St. Mary's" (with Ingrid Bergman) $8,000,000

"Going My Way" (with Barry Fitzgerald and Risë Stevens) $6,500,000

"Welcome Stranger" (with Barry Fitzgerald and Joan Caulfield) $6,100,000

"Blue Skies" (with Fred Astaire and Joan Caulfield) $5,700,000

"Road to Utopia" (with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour) $4,500,000

"Road to Rio" (with Hope and Lamour) $4,500,000

"Emperor Waltz" (with Joan Fontaine) $4,000,000

*"Gone With the Wind," one of the all-time box-office champions, has grossed $30,000,000 to date. All figures are unofficial estimates.

Of the boys, only the eldest, Gary, who already has banked royalties from his records, shows any inclination for show business. Says Bing: "Gary seems to want to try it. He sings acceptably, and he's getting better." Crosby's associates think Gary has strong potentialities as a second-generation Groaner, but Gary himself says: "You've got to be good—very good. I'm not sure." The twins, Philip and Dennis, attend Washington State College. "They're going into the cattle business." With the other boys and Crosby himself, they spend their summers working on the Elko ranch. Crosby doesn't know just what Lindsay, the youngest, wants to do. He took him to Europe last March because "I think he has real talent as an artist." Father and son dutifully toured the museums.

Recently Crosby completed a "small house" in Palm Springs, the golf-and-sunshine resort which has always been his favorite. His house in Pebble Beach, Calif., conveniently overlooking a golf course, is up for sale. The big family mansion in Los Angeles's Holmby Hills will soon go, too. Only the lodge at Hayden Lake, Idaho, and the ranch will be kept. Crosby plans to build a smaller home in Los Angeles for himself, when he is in town for a movie or a TV show.

Being the unpredictable Crosby, there is always the possibility he might change his mind and sign for a weekly television series. The odds, however, are way against it.

There is also, as any Hollywood columnist worth her unlisted telephone number knows, the possibility that Crosby might remarry soon. In recent months, he has titillated Hollywood's gossip mills by taking out Mona Freeman, a 27-year-old divorced actress ("Dear Ruth," "Dear Brat," and "The Heiress"). Asked about a "romance" with Bing, Miss Freeman parried in the time-tested Hollywood tradition: "He's an old friend. I've known him for ten, eleven years." When the same question was popped to the Groaner, he replied with what was—for him—remarkable candor: "Yes, I might get married again, if I found the right girl. *If* she'd have me."

Few Will See

Some 500 color-TV sets were operating last week. They were moving out of the factories into some retail stores and even into a few homes. Several major manufacturers, like Westinghouse, were trying to get their receivers installed and in working order at stations and distribution outlets in the twenty cities* that had the equipment to pick up and transmit NBC's color coverage of the Pasadena Tournament of Roses on New Year's Day.

Five RCA crews were flying across the country and working around the clock to get their receivers in seventeen of the cities. Other companies, like Raytheon, were shipping pilot models to distributors in Los Angeles, where the color signal may be most dependable. All the big manufacturers are planning on showing their models at the Furniture Mart in Chicago the week of Jan. 4.

A few lucky people already have sets in their homes. Some twenty RCA and NBC executives can look at color. CBS also has placed sets in several executives' homes, and is using its corporate families as "guinea pigs" before it will offer any dealers or consumers a receiver. A few metropolitan TV reviewers have the use of color sets, and President and Mrs. Eisenhower look at a color receiver, make unspecified.

*New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Denver, St. Paul, St. Louis, Milwaukee, Chicago, Grand Rapids, Detroit, Toledo, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Wilkes-Barre, Wilmington, Philadelphia, and New Haven. The quality of the color is not guaranteed in some of these cities.

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NEW RELEASES

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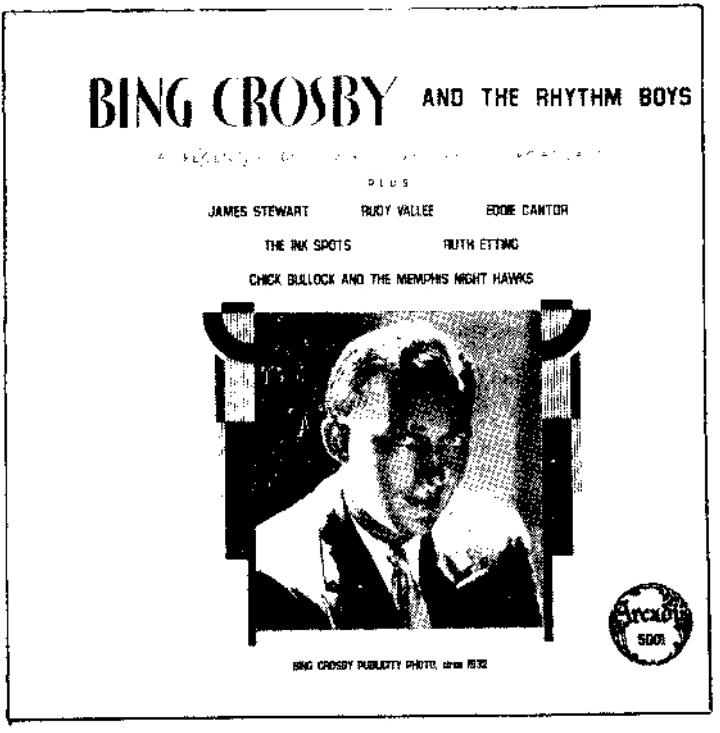


BING CROSBY AND THE RHYTHM BOYS - Arcadia 5001

It was really hard deciding what disc to give pride of place in the New Releases section of this issue of The Crosby Voice. But this one would have to take out the honours. In case you haven't heard of it yet, 'Bing Crosby and The Rhythm Boys' contains the earliest known (to me) off-air radio recording featuring Bing. Two tracks in fact, featuring the Rhythm Boys after they'd finished filming KING OF JAZZ but before they joined Gus Arnhiem at the Coconut Grove!

Even more exciting, is that one of the tracks is a number listed in the discographies but never released: EVERYTHING'S AGREED UPON. The other, A BENCH IN THE PARK is quite familiar to us, but not in this version.

Most remarkable of all is that the sound quality is excellent. Like an almost new 78 from the period. It makes this record a must.

In case you're wondering where these two radio tracks came from, let me quote from the liner notes, compiled by the record's producer Dick Raichelson:

"(After leaving Whiteman)...the Rhythm Boys were booked for 13 weeks on a variety show hosted by Walter O'Keefe and sponsored by an oil company. Although the connection is uncertain, a similar show, underwritten by the Hancock Oil Company was broadcast over KFOX in Long Beach from 9 - 11.15 on Sunday Nights. Because the radio show predates the Coconut Grove engagement, it probably aired around April-May 1930."

The two Rhythm Boy tracks are the only Crosby material on the disc but the rest of the material is no less worthwhile. There are four tracks from the Ink Spots from 1935 (their first, I think): Swinging on the strings, Your feets too big, Don't 'low no swingin in here and Swing gate swing. From Chick Bullock and the Memphis Nighthawks: Darktown Strutters Ball and My gal Sal (both 1932). From James Stewart (THE James Stewart): Day after day (1931). From a Ruth Etting film short: Love is like that and He's funny that way (1931). From Eddie Cantor: There's nothing too good for my baby (1931). From Rudy Vallee: She loves me just the same (1930).

The disc is available by mail order from:
ARDADIA RECORDS, 760 BROWER STREET, MEMPHIS TN 38111, USA.

Cost (inc. postage): $8.75 (USA), $10.75 (Canada), $11.50 (Elsewhere)
All prices are in US dollars!

PERSONALITIES ON PARADE, VOL 1. Limited 750 pressing edition

This disc almost made it into first place, not so much for the Crosby content but because it contains the only recording that I have ever heard of the voice of HARPO MARX! Admittedly we only have one line plus the words "Happy Christmas", assorted raspberries and the like from Harpo, but it really is him.

After knowing the voices of Groucho, Chico and Zeppo for as long as we can remember, the voice of Harpo comes as a pleasant surprise. As well as can be judged from a single spoken line, he has a pleasant, slightly high if nasal voice, nothing at all like his brothers.

The track is actually a private record made in 1930 - Christmas greetings from Harpo's friend Alexander Woollcott to his ladyfriend Neysa McMein. Mostly the disc contains the song 'Mighty Lak a Rose' played by Harpo and sung straight by a tenor identified as Reinald Werrenrath. Towards the end, things start to get off the rails and everyone throws in slightly vulgar comments addressed to Miss McMein. Harpo's contribution: "How's the old fanny, Neysa?"

A fascinating postscript to the history of the Marx Bothers.

The Bing number is well worth having - a film studio version of JUNE IN JANUARY recorded for the soundtrack of HERE IS MY HEART. Actually, if I'm not mistaken, this is the original with which Bing sings a duet in the film. It's nice to have the 'solo' version at last.

Other tracks on the disc (which is devoted to extremely rare material):
Al Jolson - personal message to Ruby Keeler (1929)
Harry Richman - Song of the evening (unissued 1934)
Maurice Chevalier & Ann Sothern - I was lucky (unissued 1934)
Jack Benny - A Few Bright Moments (Jack's first recording - 1928)
Joseph E Howard - There's nothing like a good old song, Honeymoon, Hello Ma Baby (personal recording - 1938)
Baby Rose Marie - Headin' for Heaven Down South (1937)
Dick Powell - Cowboy from Brooklyn (film soundtrack outtake 1938)
Eddie Cantor - Dixie volunteers (1917)
Sophie Tucker - It's all over now (1919)
Georgie Price - Where the huckleberries grow (1925)

This LP is one of four in a series and vol 2 will be also a MUST for Crosby collectors because it contains the complete Cremo radio broadcast of November 9th, 1931. In it you'll hear Bing sing NOW THAT YOU'RE GONE, THIS IS THE MISSUS and GOODNIGHT SWEETHEART.

Future issues will also contain the complete Cremo versions of GUILTY and I CRIED FOR YOU, TWO FOR TONIGHT (the full soundtrack version from the film, WHERE IS CENTRAL PARK (cut from Sing you sinners) and an alternate version of the PLEASE publicity recording.

The only problem is that you have to pre-pay for the four discs. Total cost is US$50.00 (ouch!) and the discs are only available from:

John Newton, PO Box 471, Claymont, Delaware 19703, USA.

BUT, as each issue is only limited to 750 pressings, if you really think you want the records, find the money somewhere and place your order as soon as possible. Wait, and it may be too late!

BING CROSBY - THE CROONER - COLUMBIA YEARS 1928 - 1934

The only reason that this missed bring the #1 release is that most of the material has been out on LP before. However, don't let that stop you!

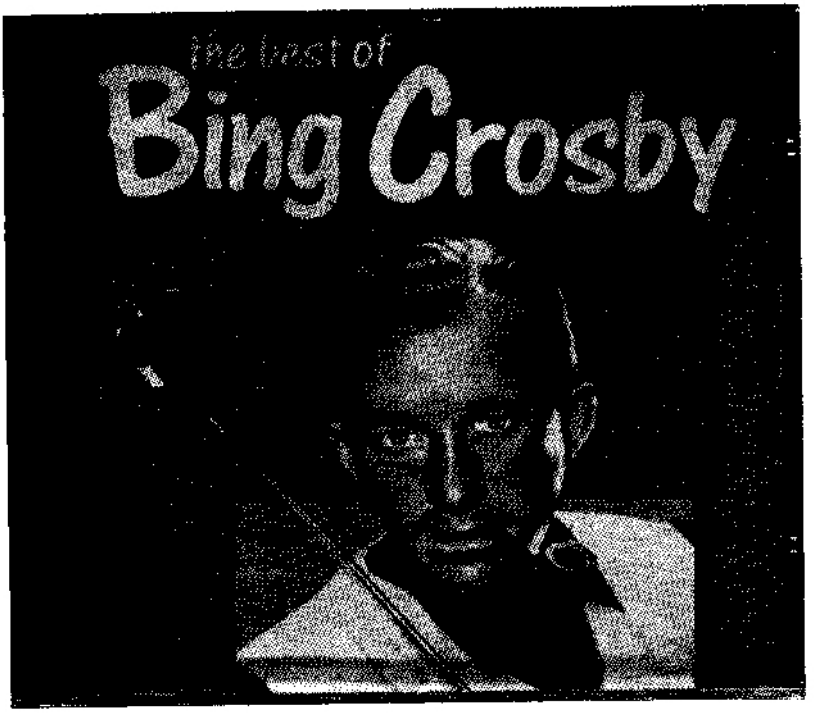
This is the issue we wrote about in the last magazine when we printed an interview with the producer, Michael Brooks. It features 65 tracks on 3 CD's, 4 LP's and 3 or 4 cassettes (not sure which).

If you look back over the interview, you'll understand why these tracks, which range from ROSE OF MANDALAY to GIVE ME A HEART TO SING TO, have never sounded so good!

There are too many titles to list here, but they include such once-rare items as SOUTHERN MEDLEY, SWEET SUE and HERE IS MY HEART. Wherever possible, Michael Brooks has used alternate takes to those more commonly heard such as on MAY I, I'VE GOT TO PASS YOUR HOUSE and YOUNG AND HEALTHY, to name three.

This set, an expansion on the 3 LP's first issued several years back, also includes such items as FACE THE MUSIC MEDLEY and LAWD YOU MADE THE NIGHT TOO LONG.

The word MUST is a little overused in this issue, but if you're building up a Crosby CD collection, you can't not have it!



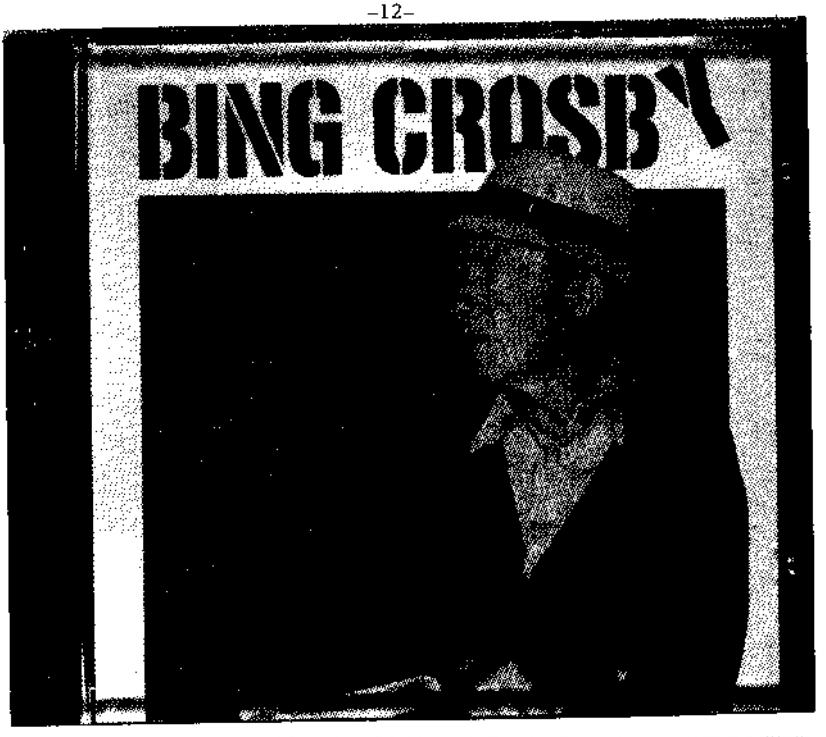
THE BEST OF BING CROSBY - CD 0248 - The Entertainers
There have been a whole series of these French CDs around town featuring a variety of artists.

This one gives us 70'33" of Bing drawn from a variety of labels. One wonders what ever happened to copyright. Jack Kapp must be turning in his grave!

From HIGH SOCIETY (Capitol): True love, I love you Samantha, Little one.
From BING WITH A BEAT (RCA): Dream a little dream of me, I'm gonna sit right down and write myself a letter, Down among the sheltering palms, Some sunny day, Mack the knife, Exactly like you, Mama loves papa, Tell me, Whispering, Along the way to Waikiki.
From DECCA singles: Blue of the night, Swinging on a star, White Christmas, A gal in calico, Too-ra-loo-ral, San Fernando Valley, In a little Spanish town.
And from RADIO (but licensed to MCA): Vaya con dios and The Jones boy.

Quality is, of course, very good. However, has any other member experienced the problems that I have had with this particular CD? Every so often the sound 'drops out' for half a second. Most perplexing. I've swapped it for another pressing but the problem persists. This is the only CD in my collection with this peculiarity so it can't be my player.

I've also seen an LP version of the above around town, but with fewer tracks for obvious reasons.

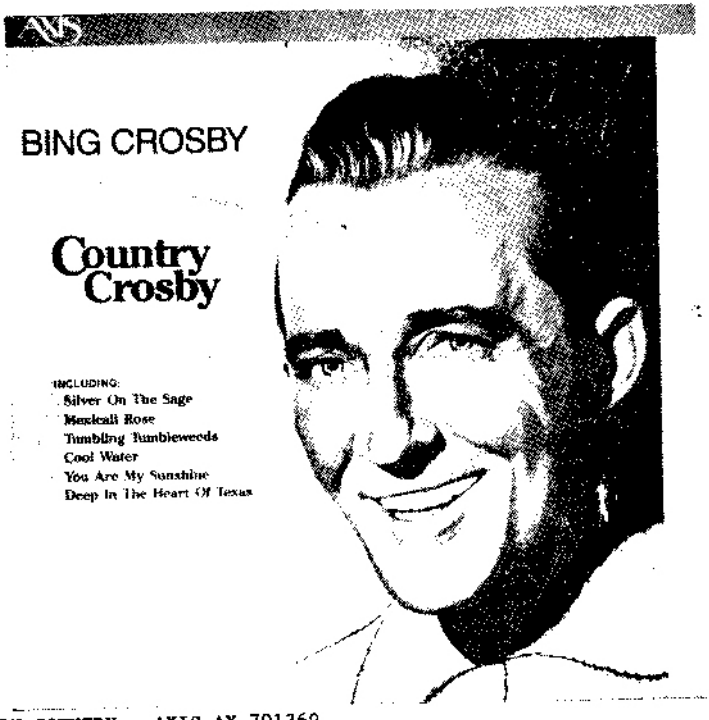

BING CROSBY

BING & LOUIS LIVE
Bing Crosby &
Louis Armstrong
SPECTRUM
Easy Listening
37
MINUTES
PLAYING
TIME

BING CROSBY - INTERTAPE 500.027 and BING & LOUIS LIVE - SPECTRUM U4016
These two CD's ought never to have happened. Even at the budget prices they sell for they are overpriced. All material comes from radio and there has been no attempt made at filtering, speed correction or even sound balancing. As a result, overall quality is dreadful.

The material (from late 40's and early 50's radio) has all been on pirate LP's before anyway and Bing is only on a handful of the Bing & Louis tracks! As the people responsible for this type of issue probably don't pay anything for the rights, you'd think that the least they could do was give us 70 minutes of music for our money.

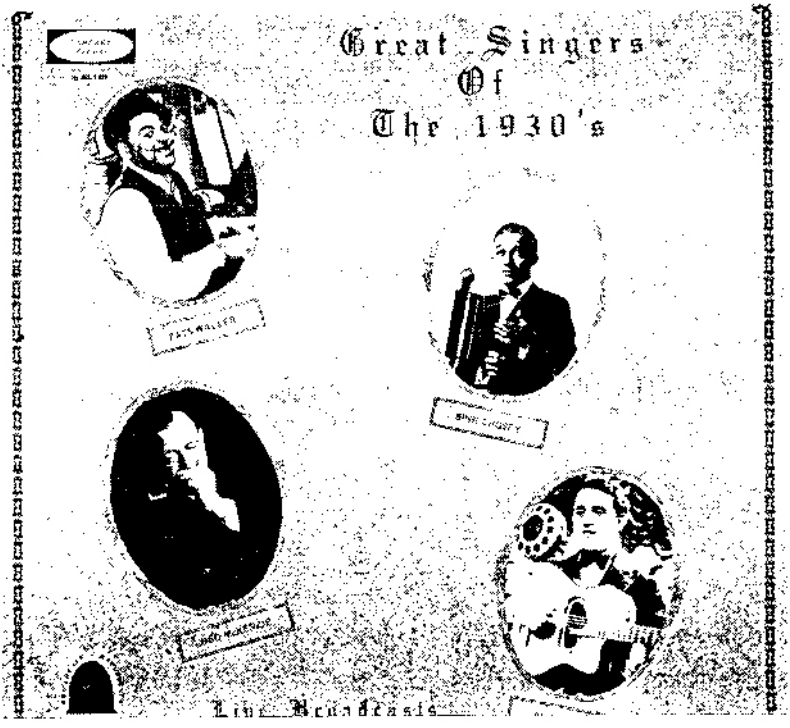
Buy the records if must, but don't say that you weren't warned!



CROSBY COUNTRY - AXIS AX 701369
This is more like it! And, when you come down to it, a rare item these days: an Australian compilation of Bing's Decca material from the mid-1930's to the early 1950's.
As the title suggests, the tracks all have a C&W flavour:
I'm an old cow hand, Take me back to my boots and saddle, Twilight on the trail, Empty saddles, Round up lullaby, Silver on the sage, Mexicali Rose, When the bloom is on the sage, Along the Santa Fe trail, Tumbling tumbleweeds, The singing hills, Cool Water, You are my sunshine and Deep in the heart of Texas.

Sound quality is first rate - no echo, no fake stereo. In fact, it sounds like some of the songs have been taken from 78's. I wrote to the company to congratulate who was responsible but received no reply. Never mind. Let's hope that there are more similar re-issues where that came from.

Overseas members can probably order the disc by mail from Ken Henderson, Bentleigh Sewing and Record Centre, 348 Centre Road, Bentleigh, Victoria.



GREAT SINGERS OF THE 1930'S - LIVE BROADCASTS - FANFARE LP 40140
Don't know too much about this disc except that one of the members sent me a photocopy of the label. It contains Bing's May 28, 1934 Woodbury broadcast plus an alternate take of STAY ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE ROAD.

Side two contains radio material from Red McKenzie (There's a small hotel, Let's sing again), Fats Waller (Ain't misbehavin, Sweet Sue, Nagasaki, Lonesome me), Al Bowlly (And you were mine).

FIVE NEW SPOKANE ISSUES
Bing in the thirties Vol 7 (Spokane 28), Vol 8 (Spokane 29), Der Bingle Vol 4 (Spokane 30), Bing and Dinah Shore (Spokane 31), Der Bingle Vol 5 (Spokane 32).

There are simply too many tracks to list the contents of all these records but most are songs that Bing never recorded commercially. Der Bingle Vol 4 contains the Cavalcade of America programme Feb 5, 1945 plus the Telephone Hour show of the same year.

As these discs are only US$7.00 each plus $3.00 per order postage and packing (maybe more overseas - write first), they are extremely good value.

Order direct from: Redmond Nostalgia Company Co, PO Box 82, Redmond WA 98073 USA.

"YOU SAID A *Mouthful*,
'WAIKIKI WEDDING' IS SOME PARTY,"
says *Martha Raye*

"Girls, until you've seen Bing make love to Shirley the way they do on the beach at Waikiki, oh . . . boy . . . you ain't seen nothing. And Bob Burns is no slouch as a Hawaiian lover himself. Why he has me so excited I actually sing Hawaiian. And, speaking of singing . . . wait'll you hear Bing and Shirley croon those new Rainger and Robin ditties . . . 'Sweet Is the Word For You' . . . 'Blue Hawaii' . . . 'In A Little Hula Heaven' . . . 'Okleohao' and 'Sweet Leilani'. Yeah, man . . . 'Waikiki Wedding' is some party . . . and how!"

"WAIKIKI WEDDING" with BING CROSBY • BOB BURNS • MARTHA RAYE
SHIRLEY ROSS • George Barbier • A Paramount Picture directed by Norman

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CROSBY PROFILES

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DEREK PARKES

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Always having had a good head for figures, it was only natural that once I saw the film 'Jungle Princess' at about the mature age of 10, I longed to see more of Dorothy Lamour. It seemed like a 'Thrill Of A Lifetime' as I passed through a 'Hurricane' to find her 'Jungle Love' and so on through a 'Typhoon' to travel along the 'Road to Singapore' where, like so many others who passed that way, I found myself laughing and enjoying a song well sung.

Not long after that, I bought a second-hand manually energised gramophone which frequently filled the air with 'Too Romantic', 'The Wind in the Willow Tree', 'Where the Blue of the Night' and 'Dancing in the Dark'. Shortly thereafter, a young lady called 'Dinah' introduced me to the Mills Brothers and so I began to buy the popular music of the day. But what a drain on financial resources! As a youngster just having started to work, a record represented 20-25% of my total weekly income - far more than my total weekly pocket money and so it was not long before I was cycling from one junk shop to another and especially to one by the name of The Record Exchange in Edinburgh, where records in new condition appeared for one-third of the new price.

I began to find deleted items and from other collectors I learned of Paul Whiteman and Gus Arnheim. Thus I acquired 'Make Believe' backed by 'Ol' Man River' and perhaps my biggest thrill was obtaining mint copies of 'Mississippi Mud/I Left My Sugar Standing in the Rain' and 'Just a Gigolo' backed by 'Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams'. In those days there were very few reissues and virtually no imports and so junking and trading were the only ways to obtain deleted items and those records issued only overseas. So it was I made contact with Don Madge in Australia - my very first overseas contact but with many more to follow in all parts of the world.

Around the mid-1950's, I obtained what I thought was quite a good Bing discography and so I now had worldwide contacts and the knowledge of what I was after...until I suddenly found I had several 16 inch records with labels such as 'American Red Cross', 'Armed Forces Radio Service', 'Philco Radio Time', 'Treasury Department' and 'Paramount Radio Recording' plus one or two 12 inch 'V-Discs' and their 10 inch precursors. There was so much of interest and I rapidly realised how little I knew and also how little money I had available to follow my absorbing hobby of collecting the recordings of Bing Crosby to the exclusion of almost all other artists.

In the late fifties, a very special friendship developed - a friendship that was to open the gates to unbelievable treasures. For many years, my trading with most collectors was not done on a financial basis but simply an exchange of one for one record.

But with one collector, this was to change for we even stopped counting. My good friend Eddie Rice showered me with records, magazines and open reel tapes of current radio and TV shows featured in the States. Thus I acquired hundreds of 'Bing and Rosie' shows, 'Hollywood Palaces' and Bing shows of every type. This was all too good - it was bound to change - and change it did.

One day I received a message tape which I eagerly played and heard Eddie bubbling over with excitement. Suddenly I found myself listening to songs of the thirties - songs I had never heard before - songs sung by Bing - songs in remarkably good quality. I knew that Eddie had met John Scott Trotter but here was Eddie telling me that John wanted Eddie to transcribe some acetates on to tape and Eddie was welcome to transcribe copies for ME! Unfortunately, the acetates were some 20 to 30 years old and some fell to pieces before they could be copied, but we still ended up with around 600 Kraft songs...but there was more! 16 inch discs were there, in new condition, of all the Philco shows (1946-49), the Chesterfields (1949-52) and the General Electric (1952-54). This amounted to 296 complete shows, over 700 songs, many of which had more than one version, giving us over 1400 recordings in total. All were sung by Bing, some on his own, some with various groups and accompaniments and some with other artists. Plus, there were many other recordings without Bing.

The cost of tape was quite a problem. The Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney shows consisted of around 300 programmes on 70 1800ft tapes and that was just a start. Throughout the sixties, my non-commercial collection increased by well over 3000 different recordings, much of this thanks to Eddie to whom I shall always be indebted. Many other collectors, some without realizing it, have Eddie to thank for much of the non-commercial material in their collection.

All has not been plain sailing. Domestic difficulties all but halted my collecting in the early 70's but by then the scene was changing. Bing was recording in the UK and then, following his death, the active Bing scene was still mainly in Britain. This has gone some way to enable me to repay my debt to Eddie - especially in later years when his own activities have been curtailed by the need to care for his wife, unfortunately now confined to a wheelchair.

Whereas I have received much help with my collecting, I have through the years tried to help others - much of it done privately - but for many years during the 1960's, I ran a small club. Since my retirement, I have tried to encourage the production of records of non-commercial songs by Bing and I am currently running a very informal club designed mainly to assist in the distribution of the more elusive Bing recordings and to give general help to Bing Collectors.
It follows that I am happy to hear from anyone who thinks I may be able to assist them.

Whereas I have many books, photographs and a pair of Bing's trousers, my main interest is in his recordings, preferably on record, but otherwise on tape. It is not easy to select the most exciting find. What a thrill it was to get my first V-Disc or the first 16 inch radio transcription disc - and the frustration of not being able to play it! Thrills came from

obtaining a 78 rpm pressing of the blow-up 'Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams', backed by 'A Blues Serenade', and unissued V-Disc test of 'Bless 'Em All'/'Louise', or for that matter, any test pressing of unissued material or alternative takes, even that elusive UPA Chevron 45 rpm of 'Thanks' by Phil Crosby with encouragement from Dad (not mentioned on the label), the Paramount publicity discs - especially 'Please' and 'Here Lies Love' with Nat Finsten (12 inch 78 rpm) now available to all on JSP 1076 which I can supply. Perhaps the record I value most is a Paramount Radio Recording of 'Put It There Pal', signed by both Bing and Bob Hope on 27th October, 1961, when I first met them on the set of 'The Road to Hong Kong' at Shepparton. The reverse side, 'Personality', sung by Dorothy Lamour, was ready for my first love, but she had returned to the States the week before!

Often I have been asked whether I've ever written to Bing but I have deliberately never done so as I always felt that he was entitled to some private life.

Apart from Bing, I collect records by the Mills Brothers. In addition, I have a near complete Fats Waller collection and records in profusion by Glenn Miller and other swing bands, the Ink Spots, Al Bowlly, Buddy Clark, Boswell Sisters, Paul Robeson, Michael Holliday, Johnny Mercer, Hoagy Carmichael, Ella Fitzgerald, Ruth Etting, Annette Hanshaw, Nat Cole and many others.

These people have brought me so much pleasure through the years, especially Bing, the Mills Brothers and Fats Waller. Yet there are those who see my collection, often through a haze of smoke, and make remarks about a waste of money. I point out that they are looking at all the cigarettes I've never smoked which can still give me much enjoyment and, should the need ever arise, they could be my future dinner!

But don't be surprised if one day you hear of a thin old man lying dead with a smile on his face and the compact disc player set to repeat!

(Those who would like to take up Derek's offer to help them obtain those hard-to-find new releases, may like his address:
66 Firs Road, Firsdown, Salisbury, Wilts, SP5 1SW, England.)

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A NEW CASSETTE FROM JOHN JOYCE

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Our generous friend in the UK, John Joyce, has donated another new tape to the club's cassette library, the contents of which I'm sure will interest you. Ask for JJ 17 when you write. Thanks again, John!

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JOHN BASSETT
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John Bassett can claim the unusual distinction of being, in Bing's own words "the worst audience I ever worked for". It goes without saying that Bing's remark was made with humorous intent as he related the story of his last Christmas show into a cassette recorder. Until that moment, John and a colleague had remained quietly unobtrusive, apparently bearing stern countenances - at least it seemed that way to Bing. Having described the scene where Stanley Baxter appears as Bob Hope in the guise of a court jester, Bing looked up and declared: "It seems to be very amusing, but these two gentlemen here don't find it a bit amusing - the worst audience I ever worked for!" His comment caused much mirth, and with chuckling from those concerned, he continued with the narrative. The six-minute message is one of four privately-recorded tapes which take pride of place in John's collection at "Bingville" - the name given to his home at Rochford in Essex.

John, a collector of 78 rpm discs for over 30 years, was first enraptured with Bing's singing voice on the evening of Christmas Eve, 1968, upon hearing the 1962 recording of "Hark The Herald Angels Sing" on Radio Luxembourg. Having fallen "under the spell" of this great man, John set about building up a Crosby collection which today, 20 years on, embraces almost 1,700 records of all speeds and sizes, and recently valued at £10,000. The collection contains a copy of the world's most rare commercially-issued 78rpm of Bing - the UK Ariel pressing of "Susianna", of which only two copies are known to exist in the United Kingdom. (You can see this rare label in the last edition of The Crosby Voice. BM)

John personally met Bing on three occasions between 1974 and 1977, as well as attending both telerecordings of the "PARKINSON" show, two London Palladium concerts, and a recording session in Chappells Studio, New Bond Street, at which John and his wife Susan witnessed Bing record "Yours Sincerely" for the United Artists album "BEAUTIFUL MEMORIES".

On the afternoon of 6th October 1977, John visited Bing at his flat in Chester Square, London, and recorded what is believed to be Bing's last privately-taped message, on which occasion the above-mentioned incident took place. At John's request, Bing agreed to sign record labels and books, and pose for various photographs, one of which has been the object of everyone's attention for the past 10 years - at "Bingville" hangs a framed, two-foot square photograph of John's son, Richard (then 2½ years old) sitting on Bing6s lap. Richard, now almost 13, remembers the occasion well, and is possibly the last child ever to be photographed with Bing, merely eight days before his death.

John is proud to have been regarded by Bing as a friend and loyal supporter, and dozens of letters and signed photographs bear evidence of this. Included among these letters received on the occasion of John and Susan's wedding, and the birth of their first son. In 1975, Susan was delighted to receive a photograph of taken of herself and Bing in Chappells studio, on which he had written "To Susan, love Bing Crosby".

At the age of 40, John has now 'retired' from the Crosby scene, having busily involved himself with various projects and journals since 1967. A list of his editorial achievements during that time looks impressive, to say the least...

Resident Columnist for TETLOW'S VINTAGE RECORD GUIDE (1967-1969)
Assistant Editor of SQUARE ONE (1969 - 1970)
Resident Columnist for THE GUNN REPORT (1963 - 1983)
Editor of BING (1971 - 1975)
Discographical Consultant for the International Crosby Circle (1975 - 1982)
Editor of BINGVILLE NEWS (1982 - 1987)
Joint compiler of:
BING - JUST FOR THE RECORD
THE BING CROSBY LP-OGRAPHY (1st and 2nd editions)
THE BING CROSBY MINI-DISCOGRAPHY (2nd and 3rd editions)
THE A - Z OF BING CROSBY

With all this activity behind him, John can now devote more time and attention to his wife and three children, although his record collecting interest remain undiminished. John is a '78 man' at heart and, apart from Crosby collecting, owns a vast number of dance band and personality records dating from 1900 to 1939. In recent times, he has successfully acquired nearly every 78 made by the Music Hall artiste, Billy Williams who recorded almost 150 titles before his death in 1915. John's other musical interests range from Abba to Beethoven, but Bing remains dearest to his heart. If you twist his arm to name a favourite title, he will probably choose the 1955 recording of "Silent Night".

John's Crosby Collection at a glance

GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

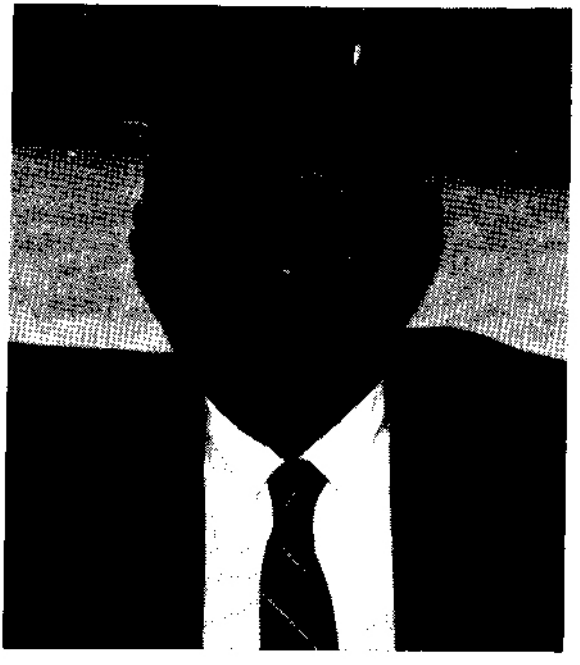
Almost 1,700 discs embracing every known commercially-issued recording by Bing Crosby (with one exception) and including many alternative Takes. Briefly, the collection contains the following:

10-INCH AND 12-INCH 78's: Nearly 800 discs, comprising:
DON CLARK'S BILTMORE HOTEL ORCHESTRA (Bing's first recording, "I've got the girl"): UK Columbia 4310.
PAUL WHITEMAN (Bing, Rhythm Boys, etc): Every UK Columbia issued. Almost every UK HMV issued (including 12-inch "High Water" and "A Night with Paul Whiteman at the Biltmore"). 23 US Victor, 9 US Columbia (including 8 "Potato Heads"). Various overseas labels such as Indian HMV, Argentine and Australian Columbia.
SAM LANIN, DORSEY BROTHERS, IPANA TROUBADORS: The world's rarest commercial issue of Bing Crosby: UK Ariel 4364 ("Susianna"). UK Columbia ("I'll Get By" and "Rose of Mandalay"), various UK Parlophone re-issues.
DUKE ELLINGTON, GUS ARNHEIM: HMV and various labels such as US Victor and Bluebird.
BRUNSWICK PERIOD (to July 1934): Almost every UK Brunswick issue including the rare 01707 ("Thanks"), 02473 and 02493. Every UK Columbia (DB series) issued. Various overseas labels such as Canadian and US Brunswick (including "I Found You"), US Perfect, Okeh, Melotone, etc. Australian Columbia. UK Rex (2 copies).
DECCA/ENGLISH BRUNSWICK (from 8th August 1934): Almost every UK Brunswick issued including the rare 01874 ("The moon was yellow"). All UK picture

labels. UK Voice of the Stars (5 copies). 29 US Blue Label Decca. 55 US black label Decca, 3 US red label Decca. Various overseas labels such as Canadian and Japanese Decca, German, Irish and Indian Brunswick, Indian Columbia, New Zealand Decca, 18 Australian Decca (including "Angels of Mercy").
POST 1955 PERIOD: Every UK Brunswick, Capitol and London. Philips (PB817). Various overseas labels such as Australian and New Zealand Capitol.
78 rpm TESTS, DEMOS, etc: Over 40 UK Brunswick Tests and Demos (vinyl), various US Decca Tests and Demos (vinyl and shellac).
MISC. 78's: Approximately 15 Bing-orientated records (including Walt Disney's "Who Killed Cock Robin?" and Ben Bernie's "It all depends on you".)
10-INCH LP'S: Over 40 albums, mostly UK. Some US issues (including rarities such as PHILCO SOUVENIR ALBUM, BING CROSBY'S AFRICAN SAFARI and two issues of LE BING - SONG HITS OF PARIS on UK Brunswick and US Decca).
12-INCH LP'S: Over 550 albums, mostly UK and US issues (including rarities such as PROJECT SING-ALONG, JOHN McCORMACK IN OPERA AND SONG, and LES POUPEES DE PARIS). Various overseas issues from Germany, Italy, France, Denmark, Portugal, etc.
SINGLES, EPS AND 7-INCH RECORDS: Over 160 issues, mostly UK and US (including rarities such as French B & B and US Chord). Special picture discs: 12-inch Bing & Bowie (2 copies), 7-inch "White Christmas" (3 copies).
LP and 45 rpm TESTS, DEMOS, etc: Various 7-inch and 10-inch UK pressings (Decca, Columbia, United Artists, Warner Brothers, Reprise) and the rare 12-inch US tests for United Artists' unissued double-LP set SOMETHING TO REMEMBER YOU BY.
MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS: 10 V-Discs (including the two rare SING-ALONG issues), Flexidiscs, Phonocards, Paramount Radio Recording (Road to Morocco"), 12-inch "Home Sweet Home" (BETTER HOMES AND GARDENS issue), and various 12-inch acetates (Decca, Thaddeus Suski, Commercial Recording Studios Inc, etc).
COMMERCIALLY-ISSUED AUDIO CASSETTES: 25 releases, mainly of UK origin, plus one 8-track Cartridge.
COMMERCIALLY-ISSUED VIDEOTAPES: Holiday Inn, The Bells of St Mary's, White Christmas and High Society.
COMMERCIALLY-ISSUED STANDARD-8 MOVIE FILM: Sing Bing Sing and Blue of the Night.

POP/ROCK

What's the best-selling pop song of all time? "Rock Around the Clock"? Close (that's No. 2). But—a Christmas surprise!—No. 1 is **Irving Berlin's "White Christmas,"** recordings of which have sold more than 170 million copies (in North America alone) to date—more than six times as many as "Rock Around the Clock." Berlin, now 99, who has written more than 1,000 songs, wrote "White Christmas" for the 1942 movie "Holiday Inn," which starred Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire. Crosby sang it in the movie and recorded it as a single. It has also sold 5,868,204 copies in sheet music form.



RUSSELL R. RULLMAN

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RUSSELL R. RULLMAN
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To look at him, one would never suspect there was anything of the zealot in his nature. Assuredly no trace of the dishevelled, eye-rolling comic-strip figure can be discovered in his placid exterior, but beneath that Regular-Fellow appearance dwells one of the genuine Oddman Cats in the Crosby Collector's cage. But Mr R.R.Rullman has his bonafides; he has earned his title.

Of course, like most of the rest of us who squirrel away multitudinous examples of Bing Crosby's singing voice, he puts puts on the act of being merely another ordinary individual. And that is as it should be; neither your town nor mine requires one more impassioned placard-bearer, shouting at the world and tying up traffic. There is disarray enough. However, if Rullman were anything less than he is, our fraternity would be the less for it and if he were more, the chances are he would not slow down for the likes of us but instead become the first-rate research-scientist that he could easily be.

He is one of the older kids on our block with new ideas. Coming rather late to 'Collecting Crosby', he has bought the sophistication and refined enthusiasms of his maturity with him. More than these, he has also brought his persuasive powers and influence as an eminent Hollywood advertising executive. 'Rullman & Munger' long ago became familiar in the entertainment industry, handling hundreds of accounts for radio, films and the print-media.

His background and work-habits have lead him to acquiring Bing's music in a thoroughly professional way. He concentrates his endeavours on one of the forms of presentation until he has established an active arrangement with several others interested in it, then - like a goldmine - he digs away gathering everything he can: Facts, figures, dates, pictures, musical material. When he has this operating, he begins another. His concentration is a wonder to behold and his single-mindedness is impressive. When he discusses Bing Crosby it is not in terms of how complete a collection he may have or how many variants or labels or issues he has located but in terms of completeness in each area.

Rullman, at the moment, has settled on the later work Bing did with Buddy Cole and Rosemary Clooney. That ten-year, or so, span (1952 - 63) occupies his fierce devoted attention. He is quite capable of calling anybody or travelling anywhere if he believes the effort will be productive. On the other hand, he barely tolerates the benighted collector who wants EVERYTHING by the master, music or otherwise. He is aware of Perry Como's deathless remark (A letter from the editor will provide this refreshing quotation!), but cooly disregards it, apart from its gauche humour. His narrow in-depth specialization techniques are resulting in satisfying success.

His novel pursuits will result, also, in great advantages for the rest of us. When he is ready to speak of them, he will do so, I am sure, here in

the Crosby Voice. Until then, we must console ourselves, licking our lips in anticipation of better feasts to come.

Before 'Bing, Buddy & Rosie', Russ involved himself in perhaps the most difficult search of them all, the songs from the early radio shows, including the many missing numbers from the Kraft Music Hall. Such long-gone material does not discourage him, it only heightens the flame of his ardour. "They're out there, somewhere," he says quietly, "in a warehouse, maybe, or packed in boxes in some retired producer's cellar." His eyes gleam at the thought. "It wouldn't surprise me if they turn up in a radio-station, maybe on a top shelf in the back room."

The television appearances? "Think of all those shows and their rehearsals which have so many of the more modern songs!" What about the AFRS stuff? "Yeah, what about them? I've always had a theory about it. They didn't really burn them up, just some of them when they closed down some of the military bases. And Veteran's hospitals sometimes had little libraries of it. A lot was sent overseas, you know. Why don't I send some letters to some people I know in England and Japan..."

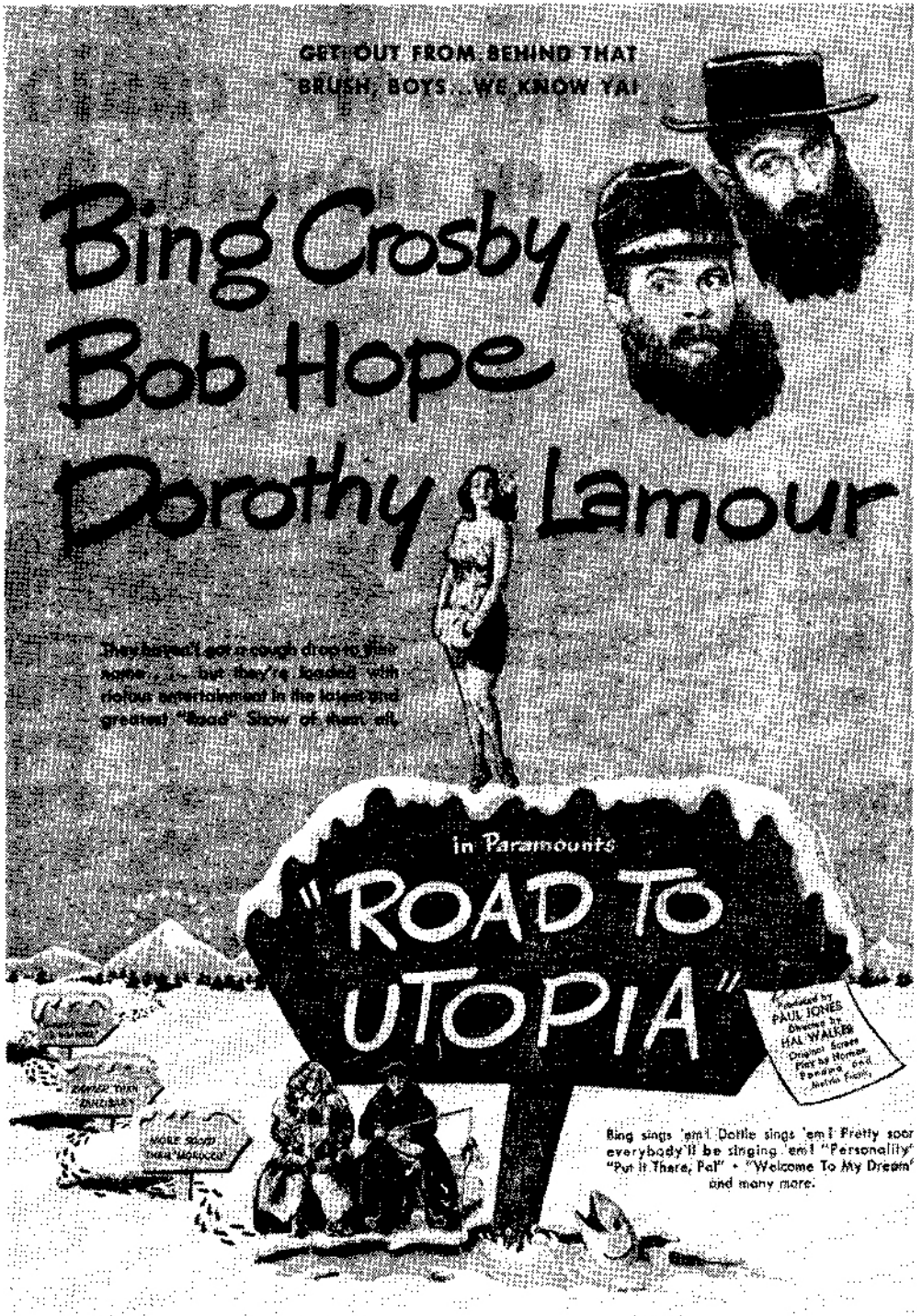
He carries it all off in an infectious manner, genially turning aside your enquiries with excited questions of his own that encourage you to ponder the possibilities. His disconcerting method of using the other person's ego to gather information only whets the appetite, reawakens almost forgotten dreams.

Sadly, altogether too many of us are resting on our bottom-lines, content with ourselves and the 'Crosbys' we own. Aging, naturally, has much to do with it, but how is it that Russ, on average, older than many of us is happily digging away in the mother-lode and coming up with both hands full? He might say that it is because he is focusing on just a few colours at a time in the Crosby spectrum, but then that leaves out the most significant part of the equation, Rullman himself.

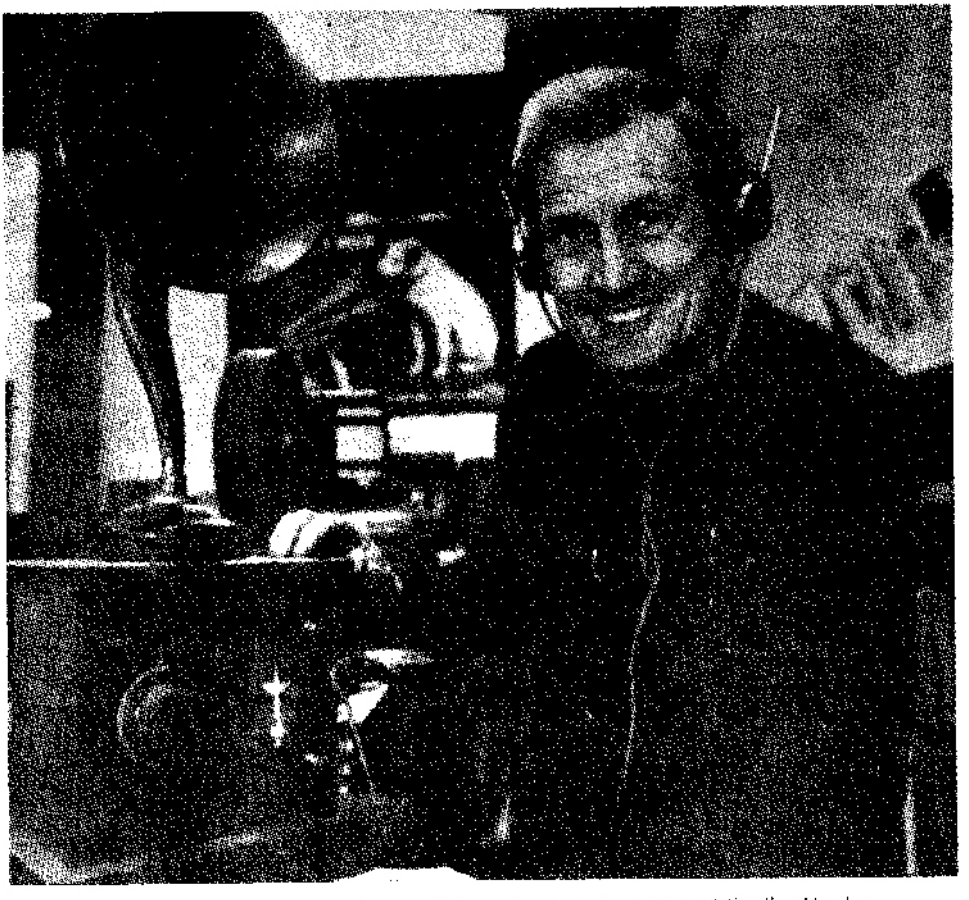
If we could have any better news than learning of a young collector coming into the fold, it is discovering there is, if only very occasionally, an ages-ignoring, bustling person like Russell joining us. He quickly explains that he has "been at it only seven or eight years, so I need all the help I can get". How can you resist? You do not; you would be a fool if you did.

His wife, Jean, like so many other spouses, tries hard to comprehend what makes a Crosby Collector - especially her own - tick ("What did Bing do? He just sang, didn't he?"). She is more than half kidding, however, because he is very aware that her husband is serenely motivated by one of life's graces, generosity, and that is keeping him vigorously young.

(Vernon Wesley Taylor)


GET OUT FROM BEHIND THAT BRUSH, BOYS...WE KNOW YA!
Bing Crosby
Bob Hope
Dorothy Lamour
They haven't got a rough draft to their name . . . but they're loaded with riotous entertainment in the latest and greatest "Road" Show of them all.
in Paramount's
"ROAD TO UTOPIA"
Produced by PAUL JONES
Directed by HAL WALKER
Original Screen Play by Norman Panama and Melvin Frank
Bing sings 'em! Dottie sings 'em! Pretty soon everybody'll be singing 'em! "Personality" "Put It There, Pal" • "Welcome To My Dream" and many more.

Tuning into the radio waves of nostalgia



John Manns in his Surrey Hills shop: people brought up on plastic are appreciating the old radios.

THE AGE, Tuesday 6 September 1988

TO THE hi-tech teenagers of today, congregating around the family radio for the evening's entertainment would seem an unspeakable punishment, but for their grandparents, brought up in the pre-television era of radio plays, 'Dad and Dave' and orchestras, it was considered not only normal but fun.

In those days, the radio was more than a piece of furniture, it was often the focal point of the room. Encased in hefty carved timber cabinets, it was as much a decorating statement as the wallpaper, sofa or light fittings.

The advent of television and more sophisticated technology quickly relegated radio to a subservience from which it has never recovered. Except in the eyes of devotees like John Manns.

John, a radio buff for as long as he can remember, turned his hobby into a business 12 months ago when he and his wife Barbara opened the Nostalgic Wireless, in Union Road, Surrey Hills.

While repairing old radios and radiograms is the bread and butter of the business, the shop is becoming a focal point for renovators and collectors of radio memorabilia.

The shop has everything from 1920s models in burled walnut cabinets through to the familiar bakelite mantel radios that adorned most Australian homes in the 1950s and '60s.

There are radiograms of the early HMV horn variety as well as the 78 diamond discs that were played on them. Among the neatly catalogued collection, you will even find some of Caruso and Dame Nellie Melba's early efforts.

And there are rows of car radios, including one from a 1939 Cadillac, which are the result of another of John's passions — old cars.

In an age of walkmans and compact disc players, John has been pleasantly surprised to find that many of his customers were not even born when 'Dad and Dave' were playing to packed Melbourne living rooms.

"The 30 to 40-year-olds who have come up through the plastic, disposable generation are starting to appreciate the old sets," he said.

"Some are doing up an old house and want something that looks authentic, while others are just collecting for the fun of it. They can remember a set just like one of ours that their grandma used to have, or they have been cleaning out their aunty's house, found her old wireless and wondered if we could get it going again."

And "getting it going again" is John's specialty. Like his father, John has always tinkered, first with radios and then with cars.

His work as a television repair man ironically was the catalyst to his setting up the shop.

"I'd be fixing up some old lady's TV and we'd get to chatting about radio," he said. "She'd show me her old wireless and ask if there was anything I could do to get it going again."

While some renovators are more concerned with the aesthetic appeal of a set, most would like the radio in working order either for their own pleasure or as a conversation piece for friends.

And when it comes to buying an old wireless from a customer, John's only concern usually is the external appearance.

"Some sets are very collectable and bring high prices, but if the cabinet is smashed or in poor condition, there's nothing you can do with it," he said. "Anything that was a bit exotic for its time or had a good quality, unusual cabinet is now very valuable.

"The art deco of the early '30s is snapped up by people who want to decorate in the same style as the house. And people who are renovating the old period houses want the beautiful old polished timber cabinet models from the 1920s and '30s."

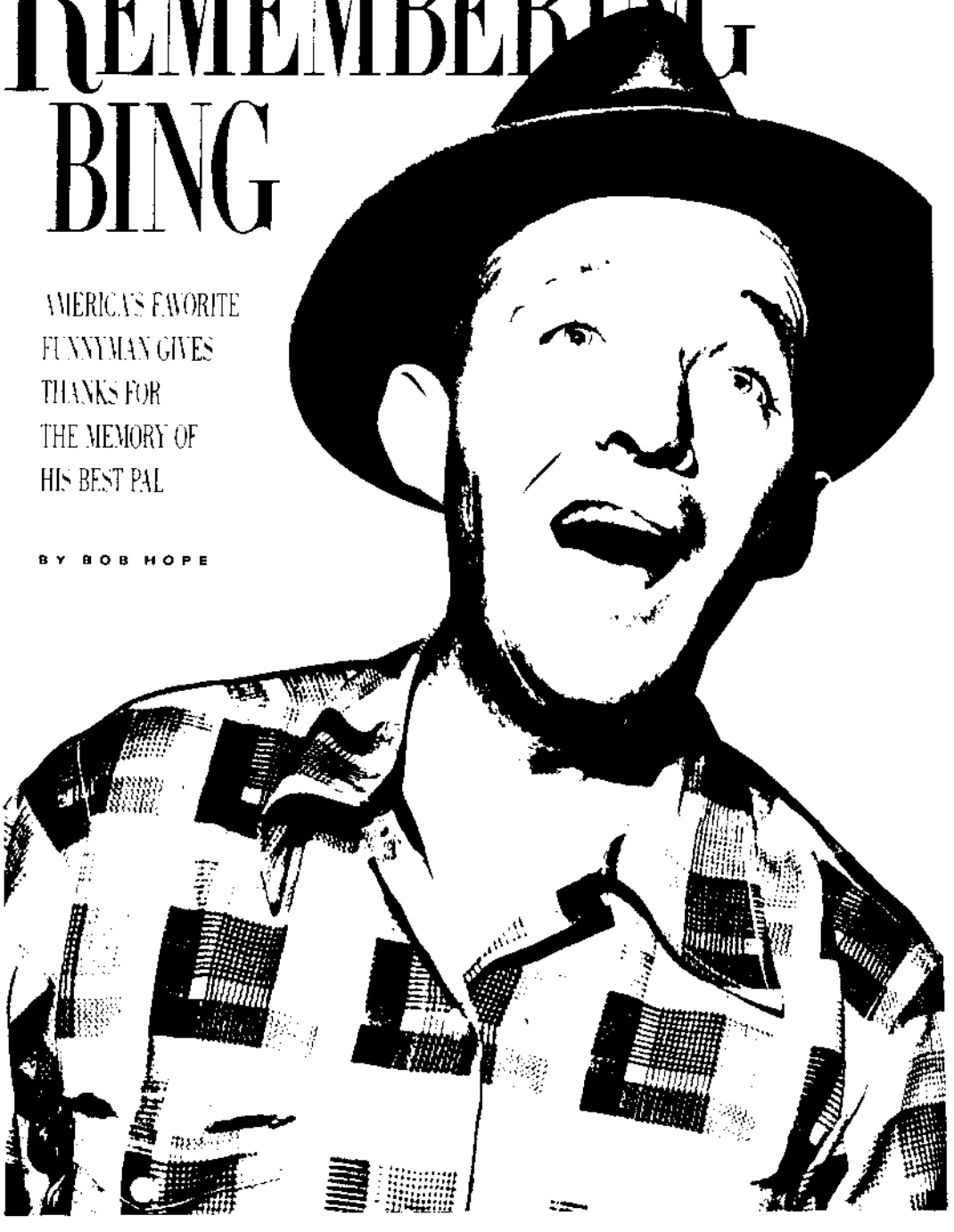
Some of these early sets, fully restored and guaranteed, can cost more than $500. But before you rush your grandmother's old bakelite set over to John, be aware that these prices reflect the number of hours John has had to spend on restoring each set.

radio announcer: Nonplussed, the older man said: "Well, who is a great modern singer to you?" "Sting," said the younger. "Well, Bing was the Sting of his day," replied the older announcer. Scandalised that Bing is already history, I consoled myself by thinking that I had heard of Sting.
Stung, Kew, V.

REMEMBERING BING

AMERICA'S FAVORITE FUNNYMAN GIVES THANKS FOR THE MEMORY OF HIS BEST PAL

BY BOB HOPE



Crosby and Hope were inseparable through seven "Road" pictures, including *Hong Kong* (above, left) and *Utopia* (above, right — with Dorothy Lamour).

Bing Crosby was a superstar long before that word was coined. He reached the pinnacle in radio, television, movies and just about every other area of show business.

Yet he was a truly modest man. Only a humble man could say, as he did in his autobiography, *Call Me Lucky*:

Every man who sees one of my movies, or listens to my records, firmly believes he can sing as well as I do, especially in the shower. He believes this because I have none of the mannerisms of a trained singer. If I've achieved any success as a warbler, it's because I've managed to retain a kind of naturalness in my style, my phrasing and my mannerisms...

Imagine a statement like that from a man who revolutionized popular singing, who won more gold records than he could count. To me, such a lack of ego is incredible. If that statement was attributed to *me*, I'd fire *all* my press agents!

Call Me Lucky? Bing wasn't the lucky one — *we* were.

But who would have thought that a flop-eared kid from Tacoma with a name out of a comic strip would end up making the words "show business" synonymous with "love"? With a mischievous twinkle in his eye, and a jaunty whistle on his lips, Old Dad was everybody's favorite Irish uncle.

Bing and I met at the old Capitol Theatre in 1932, when we were both playing vaudeville on the Broadway circuit. I was emcee, and after Bing sang his songs we clowned together. We did our impression of two orchestra leaders meeting on the street. Each of us pulled out a baton and led the other while we talked. Next we did our impression of two farmers meeting. One of us asked, "How are things down on the farm?" The other said, "It's cold in the reading room." Real Noel Coward! Then we milked each other's thumbs. It was the beginning of a long and profitable association.

I kidded Bing about his singing, his golf, his acting — but that's my *business*. I had the greatest respect and admiration for him. And the same was true of his peers in show business. I never heard an unkind word about Bing from any performer. And that's the highest accolade one actor can pay another.

That indefinable ability to project a song with such ease that every man thought he could do the same was the reason why he was as popular and as loved in London, Rome, Melbourne and Tokyo as he was in New York, San Francisco and Kalamazoo. Bing's appeal transcended national boundaries and political differences. His magic was universal. We've had no better ambassador of goodwill than Bing.

Watching Bing work was a revelation. He made it look so easy. And he had that intangible but rare quality called *class*. That's the gift that makes the difference between Hamburger Helper and caviar. Chevalier had it. Olivier has it. Bogart and Gable and Ike had it. And Bing, too, was blessed with it. He touched not just the ears but the hearts of millions.

His meticulous phrasing, his fidelity to words and music, the sensuous throbbing of his mellow baritone — he had many imitators but no peers. He brought joy to many millions of

people who couldn't even speak his language.

Television was good to both of us. And if you don't believe that, ask yourself where you were when you last saw one of our "Road" pictures. If it wasn't on the late show, then you have a better memory than I do.

Bing handled the medium of television like he handled everything else—with grace, and style, and a richness of color that didn't need any help from the NBC peacock.

If friends could have been made for each other, I would have asked for one just like Bing. As a friend, his loyalty went far beyond making sure you were well-stocked with frozen orange juice. When I had eye trouble and it knocked me out just before I was to tape a comedy special for NBC, Bing rushed in at a moment's notice, his pork-pie hat, pipe and a bottle of Murine in hand, with the comment that it was lucky it wasn't my nose or I'd be out of show business.

In the last few years of his life, audience response to his concerts with his family all over this country and in England can only be described as an expression of love. Whether he reprised his old favorites or ventured out on a current song that struck his fancy, he was embraced with great affection.

When Bing Crosby died, I lost a partner with whom I've had some of the most delightful moments of my life. Yet it would be selfish to say that it was my personal loss. It was a great loss to his family, and to the entire world. When someone of Crosby's stature leaves us, we say we've lost a good man. Not this time. With all his glorious records, great films, we haven't lost Bing at all. He's still with us.

So how do you sum up a life that so enriched us, a career that gave all of us so much pleasure? Bing leaves a tremendous void in our lives, because there'll be no one around to remind us that the simple, uncomplicated approach to life—or to a song—is still of value. That to be easygoing, unpretentious and completely natural can be attractive.

Bing was all of these things, yet there was also a strength in him. He was gentle without being meek. He was soft-spoken, but his words carried weight. He was unobtrusive, yet his presence demanded respect. As husband, father, friend and colleague, he was truly a man for all seasons.

I miss him. We all miss him. But Bing Crosby left us all something truly priceless: the knowledge that man can transcend his own mortality by leaving the world something he didn't arrive with. As long as "the blue of the night meets the gold of the day," my friend Bing will live forever.

Remembering Bing Crosby
Airs as a special evening of programming on Saturday, August 20, with *Evening at Pops: A Tribute to Bing Crosby by Perry Como* at 8 PM (repeating Sunday, August 21 at 4:20 PM) followed by *Remembering Bing* at 9:10 PM (repeating Sunday, August 21 at 2:45 PM).

Bob Hope, among myriad accomplishments, wrote I Owe Russia $1200 *and* Confessions of a Hooker: My Lifelong Love Affair with Golf. *He starred in seven "Road" pictures with Bing Crosby.*

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BOB JONES - A MEMORY

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by Keith Parkinson

Collectors and colleagues were saddened to learn of the death of Bob Jones in April of this year. Although he was only 37, it seemed as though he had been helping Crosby collectors for as long as most of us cared to remember.

Bob was known internationally because of the MOMENTS TO REMEMBER series of Bing albums he produced. These found their way to Australia and the USA together with cassette tapes he compiled of obscure and elusive Bing items.

Bob was a sharing collector. Anything he felt he could make available without inviting legal recrimination was willingly passed on. He was only concerned in covering his immediate costs. He also issued a thick catalogue of Bing items he had available and even the 'complete' Crosby collections were suddenly found wanting.

My early contacts with Bob were to obtain some radio shows from the 1940s. When it came to payment, Bob's response was: "Don't worry, you'll have something of Bing's I want one day." That day never came and by way of a 'thank you', I supplied him with a Jimmie Rogers discography published in the 1970s. A few weeks later, a cassette tape arrived out of the blue. It contained Jimmie Rogers songs not listed in the discography! That spirit of generosity was typical of Bob.

His beaming, bearded face was a landmark at the Leeds meetings of the International Crosby Circle. He always took a stall there and loaded it with Bing goodies. Even when we knew of his health problems, the help and good humour he imparted led us to think he would be helping collectors forever.

Sadly, he departed suddenly with most of us in his debt. It will not be easy to fill the void he has left.

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★★ THE ALL-TIME GREATS ★★

This chart's a thriller for Michael Jackson! He heads the list of the top-selling albums of all time.

1 THRILLER — Michael Jackson
2 SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER — (Soundtrack)
3 THE SOUND OF MUSIC — (Soundtrack)
4 SGT PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND — The Beatles
5 BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATER — Simon & Garfunkel
6 THE BEATLES (WHITE DOUBLE ALBUM) — The Beatles
7 BROTHERS IN ARMS — Dire Straits
8 RUMOURS — Fleetwood Mac
9 ABBEY ROAD — The Beatles
10= TAPESTRY — Carole King
10= BAT OUT OF HELL — Meat Loaf
10= DARK SIDE OF THE MOON — Pink Floyd

Christmas comes every year — I guess that's why Bing Crosby is still way ahead of the rest in the chart of the top-selling singles of all time.

1 WHITE CHRISTMAS — Bing Crosby
2 ROCK AROUND THE CLOCK — Bill Haley
3 I WANT TO HOLD YOUR HAND — The Beatles
4 IT'S NOW OR NEVER — Elvis Presley
5 HOUND DOG/DON'T BE CRUEL — Elvis Presley
6= I'M A BELIEVER — The Monkees
6= DIANA — Paul Anka
6= DO THEY KNOW IT'S CHRISTMAS? — Band Aid
9 HEY JUDE — The Beatles
10 THOSE WERE THE DAYS — Mary Hopkin

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IRVING BERLIN'S 100TH BIRTHDAY

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On May 11th, one of America's most prolific and successful popular composers, Irving Berlin, celebrated his 100th birthday. Reaching your centenary is a marvellous achievement for anyone, but when the person involved is a man of the stature of Irving Berlin, the occasion is doubly important.

What makes it even more special for us is that Bing was closely associated with Berlin literally from the start to the finish of his recording career - over seventy numbers including the world's best-selling disc, White Christmas.

New York member Ernest Sutkowski wrote to a number of stations about the occasion and one of the letters he received back is reproduced below. This is followed by Ernest's return letter to the Programme Director together with a complete list of Bing/Berlin recordings, which we also reproduce.

As our own tribute to Irving Berlin, we then feature two of the best magazine articles about the composer which appeared in this country.

RAVEN RADIO
KCAW • 104.7 FM

102 B Lincoln Street • Sitka, Alaska 99835 • (907) 747-5877

May 12, 1988

Ernest H. Sutkowski
20 Baldwin Road
Saddle River, NJ 07458

Dear Mr. Sutkowski:

Just a quick note to thank you for your reminder of Bing's birthday--and to let you know that we did, in fact, celebrate it here. I happen to have a picture of Mr. C. over my desk, and will always play him on the air at the drop of a hat, so your letter provided a perfect excuse for a two-week, three-hour retrospective on my morning show. (We also celebrated Irving Berlin's 100th yesterday with a full twelve hours of his compositions, which afforded me with several more excuses for more Bing!)

I salute you for your attempt to keep alive the music of a great singer; your dedication is impressive. I truly hope your letter brought results wherever it was received! Thanks on behalf of another fan; stay in touch.

Sincerely,

Jake Schumacher
Program Director

ERNEST H. SUTKOWSKI
20 BALDWIN ROAD
SADDLE RIVER, NEW JERSEY 07458

May 18, 1988

Dear Mr. Schumacher:

Many thanks for your thoughtful letter.

It was especially good to learn that as a Bing fan you continue to remember the Master.

Thought you might be interested in the enclosed discography of Bing recordings of Irving Berlin songs. 'Hope it is close to target.

There are some <u>super</u> Bing Crosby fans around and I am just a "Johnny-Come-Lately" (or am I defaming "Jake"?) One of the best is Leslie Gaylor of the Isle of Wight, England. Another is Frank Smith, U.S.; others include Frank Murphy, Phil Clarke, Jim Reilly, John Marshall, Reg Bristo, all of the U.K.; Mark Scrimger, Ken Twiss and Les Wilson (U.S.) and Bob Machliss of Australia - but there are many, many more who may be just as avid (or more) than any of the aforementioned.

So, if you need any back up, details, special recordings or, you name it, Mr. Schumacher, there are many Bing friends and fans "out there" willing to be of assistance.

Thanks again for taking time to write....but especially for continuing to remember Bing.

Musically,

Ernest H. Sutkowski

EHS/mbdb

Mr. Jake Schumacher
Program Director
Raven Radio KCAW
102 B Lincoln Street
Sitka, Alaska 99835

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BING SINGS IRVING BERLIN

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1928 - Sunshine
1929 - Coquette, Waiting at the end of the road
1930 - The little things in life
1932 - Soft lights and sweet music, How deep is the ocean?
1933 - I'm playing with fire
1938 - Alexander's ragtime band, Now it can be told
1939 - God bless America
1940 - When I lost you
1942 - Angels of mercy, Lazy, Let's start the new year right, I've got plenty to be thankful for, White Christmas, Abraham, Song of freedom, Easter parade, Happy holiday, Be careful it's my heart
1945 - All of my life
1946 - They say it's wonderful, All by myself, Blue skies, You keep coming back like a song, Getting nowhere, Everybody step, A serenade to an old fashioned girl, A couple of song and dance men, I'll see you in CUBA, I've got my captain working for me now
1947 - Alexanders ragtime band, The freedom train, A fella with an umbrella
1950 - Play a simple melody, Marrying for love, The best thing for you
1953 - Call of the south
1954 - White Christmas, Snow, The old man/Gee I wish I was back in the army, What can you do with a general, Count your blessings instead of sheep
1955 - Happy holiday, White Christmas
1956 - Heat wave, Cheek to cheek
1957 - Some sunny day
1964 - This is a great country
1965 - Always, Isn't this a lovely day, All alone
1968 - Marie, What'll I do, The song is ended, Say it isn't so, Remember, Puttin' on the Ritz
1975 - Heat wave, Some sunny day, A couple of song and dance men, Change partners
1976 Play a simple melody, Blue skies, When I leave the world behind

(Pete Moore/Ken Barnes sessions)
1978 - Count your blessings instead of sheep
1979 - Mandy

(A most impressive list, Ernest. As you can see, Bing recorded several Berlin songs twice, and White Christmas, no less than four times. I'm not sure whether the Pete Moore/Ken Barnes numbers should be included as although they are 'legitimate' releases, they weren't recorded by Bing with the intention of commercial release at the time. Perhaps we should include these with a list of Bing/Berlin radio tracks from pirate issues that have come out over the last ten years or so. There must be quite a few more songs there. Then there would be all the radio/TV tracks that have never been put on disc! When you add it all up, just <u>how many</u> Berlin songs did Bing commit to posterity? BM?)

Show Business

So, Here's to You, Irving Berlin!

A happy 100th birthday to America's favorite songwriter

Well, yip, yip, yaphank, and let's all wish a happy 100th birthday to Irving Berlin. This week everybody's doin' it—celebrating the boy born Israel Baline in Russia a century ago, who came to the U.S., reached for the moon and found that there's no business like show business. God bless America: Berlin's songs are his life.

Isn't this a lovely day? Jerome Kern once summed up Berlin's place in American popular music by observing: "Irving Berlin has no place in American music. He *is* American music." Way back when, George M. Cohan spotted the appeal of the man who had "named himself after an English actor and a German city." Berlin, said the Yankee doodle dandy, "writes a song with a good lyric, a lyric that rhymes, good music, music you don't have to dress up to listen to. He is uptown, but he is there with the old downtown hard sell."

So say it with music. Has there ever been a songwriter like Berlin? Play a simple melody, he wrote, and he has about 1,500 songs, show tunes and standards, ragtime and ballads, slow wistful waltzes and brisk up-tempo two-steps, reveries and reveilles. I love a piano, he sang, and have man and instrument ever been more symbiotic, the one giving voice to the other?

Holed up in his Manhattan mansion, a recluse for decades, Berlin is still writing songs and, some say, whole shows. Call me up some rainy afternoon, the Garbo of composers, Berlin is glimpsed only infrequently on one of his constitutionals, out for an old-fashioned walk under blue skies. But he's still handy with the telephone, dialing old friends and serenading them in a raspy voice, chewing the fat or just doin' what comes natur'lly. Let me sing, and I'm happy.

How does he do it? Berlin never learned to read music, employing assistants to notate his tunes and help harmonize them. "I'm a little like a poet who can write verses that people like, but who can't parse the sentences in his poems," he once said. Well, he isn't worried: any high school kid can parse. He always knew exactly what he was doing. In 1920, when he was still talking to the press, Berlin offered nine rules for composing a song. Write it for the average voice, for either sex to sing. The title should be strong, the lyrics euphonious. It should have "heart interest" and be "original in idea, words and music." Keep it simple. And absolutely no amateurs need apply: "The songwriter must look upon his work as a business, that is, to make a success of it, he must work and *work* and then WORK." Always.

This is the life. Hard work has made Berlin a multimillionaire, but just how many multi or millions he has, nobody knows, and he's not telling. (His first, and last, authorized biography, written by Alexander Woollcott, was published in 1925.) Berlin may have lost the knack for writing hits—his last show, *Mr. President*, was a 1962 flop—but the old downtown hard sell has never deserted him. He guards his copyrights with a care that borders on niggardliness, even though he's outlived some of them (notably *Alexander's Ragtime Band*), and he is fiercely, even pettily, protective of all his music. It all belongs to me.

The master and his music: Berlin in 1943

His songs seem to have been with us always.

In February, his lawyer served a cease-and-desist order on a New York City nightclub that was putting on a whole show of his music, even though it was a tribute to him. When Manhattan's 92nd Street Y added a fourth performance of each program in its "Lyrics and Lyricists" series—this season devoted entirely to Berlin—the composer balked at the extra performance and forced the Y to cancel it. Better luck next time, but say it isn't so.

Some of his protectiveness might stem from his origins in the hardscrabble Lower East Side, where he sang for pennies on street corners and in saloons until he landed a job as a singing waiter. His media shyness may stem from the days when his efforts to marry his wife of 62 years, Heiress Ellin Mackay, were the stuff of a yellow journalist's dreams. Her father objected; the headlines screamed. I've got my love to keep me warm: Berlin and the girl he married secretly in 1926 have raised three daughters and today live comfortably in their home on swank Beekman Place. No slumming on Park Avenue for them.

Berlin's songs are as much part of American culture as any folk song. They seem to have been with us always, defining the spirit of a nation in an artless melody, or an unexpected harmonic twist. Berlin's cares have been ours, his sentiments shared, his moods universal. When his first wife, Dorothy Goetz, died of typhoid after their honeymoon in Cuba, Berlin poured his heart into a song, venting his grief in *When I Lost You*. A stint in the Army during World War I inspired the serviceman's lament, *Oh, How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning*. And what would the holidays be without *White Christmas*, or springtime on Fifth Avenue without an *Easter Parade*?

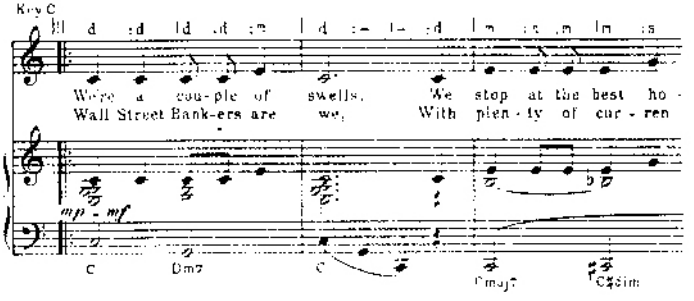
Berlin is sitting out the Wednesday-night birthday bash in his honor at Carnegie Hall, but some friends will be there singing his songs: Frank Sinatra, Rosemary Clooney, Billy Eckstine and even members of the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America, to whom Berlin assigned royalties of *God Bless America*, the country's unofficial national anthem. He has always associated with the best. Think of Fred Astaire, resplendent in *Top Hat, White Tie and Tails*, or the brassy Ethel Merman, hitting the mark in *Annie Get Your Gun* and belting out *There's No Business Like Show Business*.

So, here's to you Irving Berlin: at 100, you keep coming back like a song. For you, a pretty girl is like a melody; for us, your melodies are like a pretty girl—irresistible. On May 11, you'll be home, probably painting or picking out a new tune on the piano. But you can't brush us off: we'll be singing. Maybe we don't have to dress up, but just this once we can be forgiven for puttin' on the ritz; they say it's wonderful. So let's break out the top hat and white tie. Let's face the music and dance.

—By Michael Walsh

HAPPY BIRTHDAY MR BER~lin

The musical world is planning a glittering celebration of Irving Berlin as he turns 100. VALERIE LAWSON traces the songwriter's brilliant career.



IRVING BERLIN had a trick piano called Buick. He didn't so much play it as drive it. Because Berlin — 100 years old on May 11 — could play only in F sharp, Buick had a lever to change keys. The lever and its driver were busy for some 50 years pumping out more than 3,000 songs based, said Berlin, on four recipes for musical success: home, self-pity, love, happiness. Some of the 20th century's best songs followed the formula, the Berlin hits *White Christmas* (home), *Change Partners* (self-pity), *How Deep is the Ocean* (love) and *It's a Lovely Day Today* (happiness).

Berlin's songs weren't always as witty as Cole Porter's, as heartbreakingly lovely as Lorenz Hart's, as brilliant as George Gershwin's, as acerbic as Noël Coward's or as pretty as Richard Rodgers'. Berlin melodies had different qualities: simplicity and memorability. A Berlin song aims straight for the heart and usually reaches its target. Think of *Always, What'll I Do, Oh How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning, Easter Parade, Cheek to Cheek, Blue Skies* and *There's No Business Like Show Business.*

Of the great 20th-century songwriters, Berlin is the only survivor. In his book *The Musical Theatre,* Alan Jay Lerner remembers the evening in 1971 when the songwriters of America decided to establish a Songwriters' Hall of Fame for living writers. Ten were chosen.

"Mohammad Ali was fighting that night and I am a great fight fan," Lerner recalls. "I was standing at the rear of the hall waiting to make a quick exit when the festivities were over and dash to the boxing ring. Next to me was Duke Ellington who I discovered was also going to the fight. Rudolf Friml's name was announced, then Irving Berlin, Richard Rodgers, Ira Gershwin, Johnny Mercer, until finally number eight was reached. The Duke looked at me and said, 'Kiddo, we're not going to be nine and ten so let's go'. And we left. Well, Duke Ellington was number nine and I was ten, and were were both in a car on the way to Madison Square Garden. The tragedy is that of the 10 who were elected only two are still alive, Irving Berlin and I." Alan Jay Lerner died in June 1986.

America will celebrate Berlin's 100th birthday with a Carnegie Hall concert

Berlin in 1957 and, inset, the cover of the 1949 soundtrack of Miss Liberty.

starring Frank Sinatra, Rosemary Clooney, Isaac Stern, Willie Nelson, Leonard Bernstein and Ray Charles. In Australia, the Don Burrows Supper Club at the Regent Hotel in Sydney will bring together jazz musicians and singers, including Edwin Duff, Jan Adele and Don Burrows, for shows on three consecutive Wednesday nights from May 11.

Jan Adele will sing *Cheek to Cheek*, *Change Partners* and *I Got Lost in His Arms*, some of the more romantic Berlin songs, which Duff points out were the Berlin strong suit. Irving had the confidence to write waltz songs such as *Always* and *Remember* in the 1920s — the middle of the jazz age, the age of the Charleston and Black Bottom.

In the great family tree of musical theatre from Jacques Offenbach to Stephen Sondheim, Berlin is one of the five or six key figures. Unlike many of his fellow musicians, however, Berlin wrote both words and music. His commercial success began with *Alexander's Ragtime Band* in 1911, a hit as revolutionary in its impact as *Rock Around the Clock* in the 1950s. The song ushered in the 20th century.

Berlin must be infuriated that some of his songs are moving into the public domain and out of copyright. American legislation differs from Australia's; the composition stays under the writer's copyright for 75 years after it is written, so *Alexander's Ragtime Band* is out of copyright. (This legislation does not apply to songs written after 1978, however; these compositions are the copyright of composers for their lifetime, plus 50 years.)

Berlin is a complex man, a Jew whose real name was Israel (son of Moses) and who wrote *White Christmas*, a Russian who wrote *God Bless America*, a worrier who wrote bouncy little tunes such as *Smile and Show Your Dimple*, which he later rewrote as "In your Easter Bonnet . . .". *Easter Parade* and *White Christmas* were two of the "holiday songs" of this shrewd businessman, both written around a holiday and both bound to be commercial successes played, as they were, every year, on Christmas Day and Easter Sunday.

Berlin, who married an heiress, knew

how to write to order and was lucky enough to have his songs performed by four great showpeople, Bing Crosby, Ethel Merman, Fred Astaire and Judy Garland. They epitomised the three outlets for popular songs this century, Tin Pan Alley, Hollywood and Broadway. Berlin flourished in each.

Local jazz musicians respect Irving Berlin's work, though his songs — apart from *Cheek to Cheek* — are seldom played by them in jazz arrangements. James Morrison believes a Berlin song is "so adaptable, from early swing to a modern style, that's the sign of a great composition", while Bernie McGann says Berlin ranges "from schmaltzy to deep statements like *How Deep is the Ocean*". Pianist Judy Bailey thinks Berlin songs are interesting melodically because "they are of sound basic construction". Don Burrows says "his stuff is very easily learned and remembered. It's almost as though one hearing and you know an Irving Berlin song. Some composers are more complex, their songs are more often used as jazz standards, have more tricky syncopation Berlin's are more straight from the shoulder; let's get around the piano and have a sing song."

AVA AND SUSAN'S RECORDS

Poster for Berlin's Easter Parade. The song was bound to be a success.

Berlin knew how to sell a song from his very early days as a street singer and later a song plugger in New York. He was born Israel Baline in Tyumen, Siberia, on May 11, 1888, the youngest of eight children of Moses and Leah Baline. Like Offenbach's father, Israel, Moses Baline was a cantor: that is, the leading singer in a synagogue choir. In 1893 the parents and six of their children migrated to the US. His father died within four years of their arrival, so Israel Baline sold newspapers near the family's Cherry Street tenement in the Bowery. When he was 14 he left home to become a busker, sometimes leading a blind beggar through Bowery dives.

Berlin then got a job as a singing waiter at Nigger Mike Salter's in Pell Street, Chinatown, also known more delicately as Nellhorn's Cafe, where he wrote his first lyric, *Marie from Sunny Italy*, in 1907. Baline became Berlin as, the story goes, his name was misprinted on the sheet music.

He made his stage debut in the 1910 revue *Up and Down Broadway* for which he wrote his own songs. In the next two years Irving Berlin had a great success and suffered a great tragedy. One year after *Alexander's Ragtime Band* came Berlin's marriage to Dorothy Goetz. She died five months after their wedding, from a fever contracted on their honeymoon in Cuba. After her death Berlin wrote the ballad *When I Lost You*. He did not marry again for 13 years. In 1926, he wooed (against her father's wishes) heiress Ellin Mackay (who is still alive). They had three daughters (a son died in infancy), and there are nine grandchildren.

As World War I broke out, Berlin was composing his first complete score and lyrics for the revue *Watch Your Step*, with Vernon and Irene Castle, which had the hit song *Play a Simple Melody*. He had just become a partner in a music publishing company but didn't form his own firm, Irving Berlin Music Inc, until post-war, in 1919. Two years later Berlin built the Music Box Theatre where he staged four revues and in 1925 wrote his first musical comedy, *The Cocoanuts*, for the Marx Brothers.

His first film score (1935) was *Top Hat*, and most popular musicals *Annie Get Your Gun* (1946) and *Call Me Madam* (1950.) In 1962 he tried for a comeback with a musical, *Mr President*, which flopped.

Life, even a rich life of retirement, didn't suit him. Berlin was a bad sleeper and a big worrier. He had a few hobbies — he painted, for example — but wanted another hit. When *Mr President* failed he worked on a revival of *Annie Get Your Gun* but finally did retire and enjoyed the (undisclosed) income of the private company Irving Berlin Music.

Since the 1960s, Berlin's few interviews have been by telephone, so we don't know how he looks or how well he is. All telephone interviewers refer to his thin, raspy voice. Comedian Joe Frisco once said, "You gotta hug him to hear him". Berlin's little voice matched his size (167cm) and weight — he was built like a jockey. He had a seamed face, hooded eyes, thick black eyebrows tufting over horn-rimmed spectacles and, in the days when he performed in his own stage shows, wavy black hair.

The other day I called Hilda Schneider of Irving Berlin Music in New York. Hilda has been with the company "a long, long, long, long time". At first, Hilda didn't want to co-operate ("I can't answer these things, honey") but later squeezed out the droplet of information that Irving's health was "pretty good". Irving Berlin Music publishes only the music of the man Hilda calls Mr BERlin, which totally controls his copyright.

Berlin told an interviewer in 1948: "I am a song publisher and when I find that a particular type of song is missing from my list it's up to me to sit down and turn one out."

Berlin's money came not just from songs but from movies: Berlin always insisted on a percentage of the gross of the pictures on which he worked. Said Dave Dreyer, who worked for him for a long time: "He was the most fantastic manoeuverer for money you ever saw in your life. He outmanoeuvred all those sharpies in Hollywood as though they were boy scouts."

Berlin could afford to be philanthropic. He gave the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides the royalties from *God Bless America*, written during World War I but which did not become a hit until Kate Smith revived it in 1938. Eisenhower decorated the Siberian-born Irving for his "services in composing patriotic songs" such as *Any Bonds Today?* (to promote the sale of defence bonds) and *Arms for the Love of America*. Berlin's second army show, *This is the Army*, netted $10 million, which he gave to Army Emergency Relief. His first army show, written in 1918, was *Yip Yip Yaphank*, which featured *Oh How I hate to Get up in the Morning*.

Berlin's biographer, freelance British journalist Michael Freedland, was told that watching Berlin write was like watching a woman in labour. He paced the floor in what seemed more like a movie version of a labouring woman's husband, cigarette burning, and when inspiration came, raced to Buick (a $100, antique, carved-oak upright), stuck the cigarette on the yellowed keys and worked out the melody or the words, whichever came first. (He found it a "damn sight harder to write the words than the music".)

"My talent, if I had one," whispered Irving Berlin, "is to be part of the times. And what I did was no more than being able to recognise what rhythm is and being with the times."

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BITS 'N' PIECES

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* BING! MUSICAL SET FOR 1988-89 TOUR. To quote from the press release: A major musical, **BING - A Musical For All Time**, is currently in development. A US national tour is tentatively scheduled to begin in November in Bing Crosby's birthplace, Tacoma. A workshop production, which will precede the tour, will open in May in New York City at the American Theatre of Actors.

The purpose of the show is to help create a memorial museum dedicated to the memory of Bing and for creation of a heart research fund through the Bing Crosby Historical Society.

The producers, CML Productions, Inc., have agreed to donate the lion's share of revenues to these two worthy causes and are seeking donations to help mount the production. This will be a first class Broadway calibre musical that evokes the crooner's life and times. Please help us make this history-making event a smash by making your donation payable to:

The Bing Crosby Historical Society, PO Box 216, Tacoma, Wa. 98401, USA.

* GET THOSE BACK ISSUES OF THE CROSBY VOICE YOU MISSED - FREE!
They've been piling up over the years and I simply don't have room for them anymore. So we're getting rid of all back issues of this magazine. If there are any that you would like, let us know NOW and they're yours for nothing. Well, almost nothing. We do ask you to pay any postage cost involved.

Send me a list of any issues you may be after and I'll let you know what we have left. Closing date is DECEMBER 31st, then the magazines go out as the new year comes in. Address your requests to: Bob Machliss, VBCS,
PO Box 422, South Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3205.

* As a sad postscript to Irving Berlin's 100th birthday, we learned that a few weeks later, his wife of 65 years, Ellen, passed away.

* Anyone ever seen a copy of a Guy Mitchell EP on Coronet (KEP 122) entitled A TRIBUTE TO BING? The four tracks, PENNIES FROM HEAVEN, THE SINGING HILLS, WAS IT RAIN and EAST SIDE OF HEAVEN were all recorded in the mid-1950's from the look of the photostat copy of the cover I was sent.

* It's a great time to be living in Melbourne if you enjoy nostalgia radio. We've never been so well catered for with the sounds of the past. A quick rundown of the main shows of the week includes: Saturdays: STEAM RADIO, 2.30 - 4.00pm, 3CR; SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY, 7.10 - 10.00pm, 3LO. Sundays: GOLDEN MEMORIES, 3.00 - 9.00 pm, 3UZ; NOSTALGIA UNLIMITED, 7.30 - 11.30 pm 3CR; REMEMBER WHEN, 8.00 - 12.00 pm, 3AW. I know that there a couple of other weeknight shows on the ABC but I haven't caught up with them yet. Anybody able to fill me in on these?

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LETTERBOX

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From Mark Scrimger, Parma, Michigan

If you are having trouble meeting a firm issue deadline, by all means go to three issues a year. Lord knows that Bingang has trouble with our own semi-annual publication dates.

There is a re-issue available here of the HOLIDAY INN album from the Bing's Hollywood serie. You can choose from three formats: CD at $11.99, LP at $3.99 or cassette at $5.99. They say that they are using the same cover and liner notes but the cover is somewhat different in colour and the picture has been enlarged so that the printing now runs through Bing's hat instead of above it. Also, the names Irving Berlin and Fred Astaire have been added in a prominant position.

There have been rumours that MCA plans to re-release the entire series but I rather have my doubts as few of the original records contain material as familiar to the general public as appears on this particular disc. We'll see.

From Trevor Wagstaff, Hornchurch, Essex

As a new member of The Victorian Bing Crosby Society, I thought that I would drop you a line to say how pleased I am to have joined your club. In fact yours was the only Bing organization of which I was not a member; now, thanks to Keith Parkinson in regard to UK subscriptions, things are so easy.

It is surprising how quickly the acceptance of the compact disc has occurred in Bing Circles. I can of course understand this; the sound quality is really something, along with the programming of 70 minutes or so.

In the last issue of the magazine, you asked the membership whether three issues per annum of The Crosby Voice would be acceptable, to give you more personal time. This is OK with me. The various club magazines all come together, so it would be good to have one arrive at a different time.

From Vern Taylor, Portland, Oregon

Ken Twiss' 10th Annual Tribute to Bing in Tacoma was a warm, pleasant experience among old acquaintances. Tommy White put on an all-out imitation of Bing complete with pipe, an assortment of hats, face make-up, gestures and all. Some of us applauded our heads off, they thought he was great. Tommy was also a pleasant and friendly man and impressed everyone with his behaviour. A trio rounded out the entertainment and all of us feasted like kings on the wonderful food. But the big deal of it all was that 'getting together' feeling. No headliner could top that. Perhaps Bing did something even more beautiful than sing for us. He made friends out of strangers.

(OPPOSITE PAGE: TOMMY 'BING' WHITE)

From Stan Leland, New York
Recently, a dealer here had a mint Decca White Label special of Bing singing THE GIRL WITH THE PIGTAILS, made especially for Jack Kapp's daughter with the lyrics changed and her name inserted. This was a birthday present for her (I believe her 10th or 12th birthday). Did you ever hear of this record? Do you know anything about it? The dealer sold it for $150 to a collector in Connecticut!

(No Stan, I don't know anything about this private issue. Can any of the members tell us more? BM).

From Ben Radley, Wynnum West, Queensland

30/5/1988

2132 Wynnum Rd.
Wynnum West Q.L.D
4178.

Dear Mr. Matchalas
How are you?
I am writing this letter because I haven't written in ages and I wondered how everything was going and also could you please send me an extra copy of the record Det as I have lost mine.

Kindest regards
Ben Radley

From Ken Twiss, Tacoma, Washington
We are now getting close to getting our Centennial project on the road. I have finally, after such a long time, got the 'City Fathers' to realize that what we are doing now will be a major tourist attraction for the city - and are now co-operating - not with money - but helping to clear the way for progress.

In order to get the Society better known, we are planning a film festival as a fund raiser. We will have the help of the Pantages Theatre Director. We will show only major films made in the state of Washington. This will be a public affair and should give us some credibility. We need that for participation in the Centennial.

Bing, the Chairman, and the King

Two factors have revolutionized twentieth-century America: the appearance of technological innovations and the flood of immigrants from eastern and southern Europe. Naturally, these factors have revolutionized twentieth-century American popular culture as well, and have shaped the careers of the three greatest popular singers of our time. For there are only three great ones, if we consider singers as singers, and disregard the singer-songwriter-instrumentalists from Chuck Berry to Bruce Springsteen; they are Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, and Elvis Presley. Each man can claim a superlative: Bing was the best loved, Frank was the greatest artist, and Elvis was the greatest social phenomenon. Their careers have definite patterns which link them together than Elvis', but Frank and Elvis are much more alike as personalities.

The crucial fact that unites them is that all three were immigrants in different ways. Before we consider the meaning of immigration and assimilation for each of them, let us pause to note historian Gilbert Ostrander's comments on the general significance of immigration:

> The century of America's fast machine age was also the century of the great European exodus, and the European migration to America during the century after 1820 equaled three times the total population of the United States in 1820. German and Irish immigrants arrived in the north-eastern United States by the hundreds of thousands annually from the 1840's on; beginning in the 1880's, they were joined by the "New Immigration" from southeastern and central Europe; and beginning early in the twentieth century, American cities absorbed the mass migration of Negroes from the southern countryside as well. This ethnic assimilation, compounded by technological revolution, had comprehensively transformed the American national character by the eve of World War II.

German and Irish immigration in the 1840's gave rise to the first organized expression of innocence (or nativism, as it is called in politics), the Know-Nothing Party. But of far greater consequence was the Jewish immigration, which amounted to 1.5 million between 1880 and 1910. These Jews came from the urban areas of eastern Europe (Minsk, Kiev, Warsaw, and so forth), and tended to stay in the urban areas of America; barred from many professions and possessing a vigorous tradition in the performing arts, they had an extraordinary effect on popular culture (as well as on science and high culture, of course).

Repressed minorities need to have a shrewd sense of what the majority public likes in order to survive, so it doesn't seem surprising that Jewish immigrants such as Adolph Zukor, Louis B. Mayer, Samuel Goldwyn (born Samuel Goldfisch in the Warsaw ghetto), and the Warner brothers dominated the movie studios from the twenties through the fifties. Then, too, there were the great Jewish songwriters such as Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, and George and Ira Gershwin. In McLuhan's terms, the extraordinary success of Jews in American show business does not mean that they have a natural sense of rhythm, any more than blacks do. Rather, their success comes from the energy released by the fragmentation of a traditional, oral society during assimilation into the literate environment of American life.

It was the music that Irving Berlin and the others wrote that McLuhan was referring to when he noted that the word "melody" comes from the Greek "*melos modos*, 'the road round,'...a continuous, connected, and repetitive structure that is not used in the 'cool' art of the Orient"[2]. This continuity

Al Jolson was born Asa Yoelson in Srednicke, in Russian Lithuania. His father was a rabbi who emigrated to America in 1890, at the height of the Jewish immigration. Thus, Al Jolson's life shows a working out of what I call the three-generation" theory[5], in which the fragmentation of an oral society, and the expression of that fragmentation in a famous person, takes three generations. I first noticed this pattern while reading Erik Erikson's *Young Man Luther*. Erikson shows that Martin Luther's grandfather lived the traditional life of a German peasant, his father made the break from farming to become a miner, and Luther began the Reformation. This pattern seems to have been inherent in the breakup of traditional societies in the West, for it also appears in the lives of Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin.

The three-generation pattern appears clearly in Al Jolson's life. His grandfather lived a traditional life in a poverty-ridden nineteenth-century *shtetl*, his father moved to America, and Jolson left an estate of $1,000,000 when he died at his Palm Springs home in 1950. But the fragmentation in attitudes which show-business success on this scale requires means a secularization of values as well. As with Martin Luther (and with Hitler, too, for that matter), tension usually arises between the father and the grandson on this point. It disturbed Jolson's devout father a great deal that his son was singing secular music, and it is most appropriate that this conflict appears in *The Jazz Singer* (1928). (This same conflict between cantoral and secular singing appears in the careers of Jews who wanted to become opera singers as well—as the life of Richard Tucker shows.) In fact, Pleasants claims to hear traces of cantoral diction in Jolson's singing. But, paradoxically for the man who starred in the first talkie, Jolson could not deal with, or accept, technology; and thus he limited his own fame. As someone once said, "he needed the contact with a live audience like a diabetic needs insulin." He never reached the stature of Bing, Frank, and Elvis.

occurs only in literate societies. Musicologist Charles Hamm describes such music as "tonal" (it begins and ends on a certain tone), uses triadic chords, and is goal-oriented in that each given piece moves toward a climax. The climax in "The Star-Spangled Banner," for instance, occurs on the word "free" in the line "O'er the land of the free." These characteristics occur in most post-Renaissance Western music, whether it is popular music, or Beethoven[5].

It is important to understand that the music of Beethoven shares this characteristically literate structure with the music of Irving Berlin, because the first great rock 'n' rollers-like the first great jazzmen-came from areas characterized by what Walter Ong has called "residual orality," and they challenged and changed that structure. They did so because they came from a society which had internalized literacy to a lesser degree than Yankee America.

Although he does not use the term "oral society," Henry Pleasants is implying what that term means for performance styles when he speaks of a singer who:

> ...could not see artistic value in moving cleanly from, say, C to G, when his intuition sensed melodic and rhetorical substance in uncharted pitches between the authorized modes. So, while accepting the European diatonic major and minor modes, and a European four-beats-to-the-bar-rhythm, he bent the notes and shifted the rhythmic accentuation to suit his communicative purpose, achieving a rhetorical elegance previously unknown in Western music[6].

Considering the importance of black performers in twentieth-century America, Pleasants calls this an "Afro-American" idiom, and the first great performer who used it, the first true superstar of modern America, was Al Jolson, whose life and career show some of the patterns which are repeated and varied in the lives and careers of Bing, Frank, and Elvis.

While discussing Bing, Frank, and Elvis, I want to define "talent," that amorphous quality usually measured by popularity (just as popularity is defined by talent), as the merger of the two factors which I mentioned at the beginning. "Talent" can be defined as the process of the merger of the socio-ethnic group from which the performer came, and the performer's intuitive ability to sense the possibilities of new technology. By general agreement, Bing Crosby had a lot of talent.

Bing Crosby was born in Tacoma, Washington, May 2, 1904 (or 1901—there is some disagreement about the year) into a Catholic family. His forbears presumably came over from Ireland during the wave of immigration in the mid-nineteenth century, so his life does not conform to the three-generation pattern, as Jolson's does. But the Irish connection proved important for him because the Irish have a long-established tradition of performance on which he could, and did, draw. As a matter of fact, one of Bing's uncles, a certain George Harrigan, had a fine Irish tenor voice, and became a local singing star in the Tacoma-Seattle area. Catholicism creates few of the conflicts between secular and sacred performance that Jews such as Jolson experienced. We also need to remember that Bing attended Gonzaga High School in Spokane, a Jesuit institution where public speaking was a priority subject, and elocution competitions were held regularly. Bing attributed much of his later success, his confidence in public, his ability to project his voice, and so forth, to this early training.

But Bing did not have to project his voice as Jolson had. He became famous for his crooning style, of course, and that crooning style depended on the presence of a microphone. A full explanation of its meaning requires a brief digression here.

Technology does more than fragment oral societies; it also determines the styles of the music which the great performers create. Occasionally, a detail will serve as a part for the whole, and explain, in the most general terms of course, the major features of an era. Consider, for example, the importance of the trumpet for jazz in the twenties (Kid Ory, Louis Armstrong, and Bix Beiderbecke), and then of the trombone and saxophone (Tommy Dorsey and Lester Young) for the big bands in the thirties and forties. A holistic explanation of the instrumental lineup of these bands has to do with the situation in which people listened to the music. Now, the nightclubs and dance halls in which people listened to jazz and swing did not always have the acoustics of Carnegie Hall, and the audience did not always concentrate on the music. So brasses and reeds, not strings, predominated because they could produce and sustain the necessary volume.

The same thing applies to recording techniques. As one historian of the record industry has put it, "The enormous volume capacities of the brass and percussion instruments had been ideally suited to the recording facilities of the day, but of course they had not been able to approach the subtle sound of the violin with its soft overtones."[6] Since recording technology before 1925 could not accommodate stringed instruments, it could also not accommodate crooners.

The popularity of Bing's distinctive style was a response to the invention of the microphone and of electrical recording techniques in the middle twenties, when the changeover from the crude acoustic microphones to the increasingly sensitive electric microphones began. Pleasants says that Bing "was, in effect, overheard by the microphone."[7] Bing didn't sing at the microphone, as Jolson did, he sang *into* it. Particularly on Bing's early recordings for Okeh, and the other small labels in the early thirties, he "sounds as if he were leaning over the piano in your own parlor singing to you,"[8] as a radio announcer of the time put it. As a matter of fact, Bing's only failure as a performer came when he and his partner Al Rinker were playing the Paramount Theater in

New York with Paul Whiteman's band. As Bing's biographer explains the situation, "These were the days before microphones on stage and the Paramount was much larger than any theater they had played before. The audience just couldn't hear them . . ."[8]

Technology in the form of the microphone, in effect, displaced the music and changed the relationship between performer and audience. Before the twenties, when people listened to a band and a singer, they had been occupying public space in a concert hall or theater designed for that purpose. Now, people could listen to a band and a singer in private space, in their houses and apartments, by simply turning on the radio or record player. This crucial change in the stylistic history of popular music did not happen once and for all, however; a constantly changing dialectic between public and private space continues to operate in popular music even today.

For Bing, the presence of the microphone meant that he could croon, not belt, so that, in effect, he was the last of the parlor singers. People heard his radio programs every week in their parlors. They thought of him as a friend of the family, not a star. His style seemed so simple that they believed anybody could do it; it reinforced the impression that he was really one of them. This simplicity and familiarity enabled him to convey a whole society's despair in "Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?" And, of course, his celebration of our biggest holiday, "White Christmas," remains the most popular record ever made. Clearly, then, Bing democratized popular singing (his immediate predecessor, Rudy Vallee, had gone to Yale, after all).

Bing helped to move the locus of popular music from New York to the West Coast, away from communications of elitism. Bing was also a true innocent in that he disliked the trappings of show business, he wore casual, comfortable clothes, and his passion for golf at times seriously hampered the development of his career. Yet, we notice that Bing's lack of ambition also comes from his need, possibly unconscious, to play the prosperous Irish squire. After he sowed his wild oats in the twenties, he settled down with a nice Catholic girl, was a stern disciplinarian to his children, and went to horse races whenever he could.

Francis Albert Sinatra was born on December 12, 1915 in Hoboken, New Jersey. His life conforms to the three-generation pattern very well indeed. Because his paternal grandfather lived in Sicily, Frank thinks of himself as Sicilian. His parents came to this country and achieved a certain level of middle-class success. Like Martin Luther's parents, Frank's parents wanted him to choose a safe career; they strongly opposed his desire to enter show business.

Until the publication of the autobiography on which he is supposedly working, the most informative statements about his performance style that Frank has made are in an article, "Me and My Music," which appeared in *Life* in 1965. In it, he explicitly links himself with an Italian tradition of performance, in the same way that Bing had a homey precedent for singing in his uncle. Frank says that he searched for a distinctive style of his own and "What I finally hit on was more the *bel canto* Italian school of singing, without making a point of it."[9] As Peinkofer explains, *bel canto* exploits *rubato*, the practice of stealing time from one note in a phrase and giving it to another, and it is Frank's *rubato* that creates his distinctive phrasing, as when he holds the word "go" in the first line of "You Go To My Head." But his impeccable distinctive style balances *rubato* with *legato*, the smooth passage from one note to another. As it happens, Frank tells us that he learned this *legato* from an odd musical couple: Tommy Dorsey and Jascha Heifetz.

> In the middle of a phrase, while the tone was still being carried through the trombone, he'd go *shhh* and take a quick breath and play another four bars with that breath. Why couldn't a singer do that too? Fascinated, I began listening to other soloists. I bought every Jascha Heifetz record I could find and listened to him play the violin hour after hour. His consecutive bowing, where you never heard a break, carried the melody straight on through, just like Dorsey's trombone[10].

Here we have the *melos modos*, the flowing continuity to which McLuhan referred, which no singer had ever developed so consciously or masterfully.

But Frank could never have sung to very many people in this way without the microphone, and he knows it.

> One thing that was tremendously important was learning the use of the microphone. Many singers never learned to use one. They never understood, and still don't, that a microphone is their instrument. It's *like they were part of the orchestra*, but instead of playing a saxophone they're playing a microphone[12].

For all of Frank's desire to sing as though he were part of the orchestra, he surely knows that, by their very nature, the big bands limited the importance of the singer. Their popularity had caused them to grow, so that by 1940, when Frank joined the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra, it numbered 19 musicians. Several of those musicians, most obviously Tommy himself, were virtuoso performers in their own right. Such size precluded the exciting improvisations of jazz in the twenties and required elaborate orchestrations which subordinated the singer to an overall effect. The fact that Tommy would not allow Frank's name to appear on the records that Frank made with his orchestra tells us a lot about the role of the singer in big bands. There was merely an indication of "Vocal Chorus," and that anonymous vocal chorus usually followed an instrumental introduction of at least 32 bars.

Frank thus found himself in a paradoxical situation in the early forties. On one hand, by using the microphone, he could sing over the brass and reed section on which he had modelled his style, but on the other, the arrangement treated him like the proverbial cog in a machine. As a result of this tension, Frank broke with Tommy after staying with him for two and half years. The microphone isolated the singer from the backup group, and thus began a trend which affects popular music even today.

Like most stylistic innovations, Frank's emergence from the big band had a precedent, and one which demonstrated that high culture and popular culture evolve in similar ways. The microphone was to the big band what the heavy nineteenth-century piano was to the symphony orchestra. In terms of performers, Frank was to twentieth-century popular culture what Franz Liszt was to nineteenth-century high culture. As the nineteenth century progressed, changes in the manufacture of pianos produced a bigger piano than the one which Mozart had played. This instrument could maintain very high tensions on the strings, and thus produce greater volume. This greater volume isolated the soloist from the symphony, and created the possibility for Liszt's virtuoso displays. Similarly, the microphone gave the singers more volume, and isolated them from the big bands. Liszt could thus dominate an orchestra when he played a concert just as Frank could dominate a big band when he sang. Arnold Shaw calls Frank a "twentieth-century Romantic," and so he was, just as Liszt was a nineteenth-century Romantic. Both men exploited technological innovations which made it possible for them to display their personalities and egos (Not coincidentally, both men had a similar effect on women).

The years with Dorsey formed both Frank's style and his repertory; they gave him his phrasing and his songs which he has been singing for forty years now: "I'll Never Smile Again" (his first big song, from 1940), "The Song Is You," "Night and Day," and so forth. But because of the tension between the singer and the big band, Frank did not sing at his best with Dorsey. His voice, while clearly The Voice, sounds thin and unexciting on his 1940 recording of "Fools Rush In," with the Dorsey band.

Frank's greatest musical achievements came some twenty years later, from about 1955 to 1965—that is to say, from the time Elvis burst into national prominence to the British Invasion. As Arnold Shaw reminds us in his biography of Frank, in the 1957 *Down Beat* readers poll, he outpointed his nearest contender for the top male singer by ten to one, he won the *Metronome* poll so overwhelmingly that the editors commented, "Sinatra literally devoured this one; there was no chance for anyone else." They put him on their cover as Mr. Personality, while *Jazz 1957* named him and Billie Holliday as Singers of the Year[1].

In 1962, Frank released no fewer than four albums which went gold: *This Is Sinatra; Frank Sinatra Sings for Only the Lonely; Songs for Swingin' Lovers;* and *Nice 'N' Easy*. Nelson Riddle, a big band veteran and a former trombonist, arranged these albums, even including "Fools Rush In," (which Frank had first recorded 22 years earlier) on *Nice 'N' Easy*. The title of a slightly later album, *Sinatra and Strings*, tells us what makes these albums great music.

The improved recording studios which created rock 'n' roll also created Frank's best work. The microphones could pick up the lush strings which had replaced the brasses and reeds without letting them compete with him, or interfering with his exquisite phrasing. If the big band sound was predicated on public performance, these albums were for home listening—preferably on the living room couch. In the phrase of the day, Frank was singing classic makeout music.

Just as Liszt was not the first or only nineteenth-century piano virtuoso, Frank was not the first or only singing star who emerged from a big band. Although they were the greatest at what they did, and had the greatest public impact, they appeared as the culmination of a clear evolution. Bing had sung with Paul Whiteman before beginning a solo career, and Frank had many contemporaries whose careers resemble his. Virtually all the white popular singers of the post-war era, such as Doris Day and Perry Como, began their careers with big bands, and then broke with them.

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THE LONG, SAD SAGA OF "CHECK AND DOUBLE CHECK"

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Whilst in America about a year ago, I picked up a commercial video issue of "Check and Double Check" for the very reasonable price of $7.99. I thought "This will make an interesting support feature at one of our meetings". Although the tape was in the American NTSC format which normally can't be screened here, this was no problem as the AMP Theatrette can show the US standard.

However, when we ran the tape at our April meeting, imagine our annoyance at discovering that the last 30 minutes was missing! As there was an address on the box (Video Treasures New York), I sent off a short note explaining the problem, with little hope that I would hear back.

To my surprise and pleasure, they sent back an immediate reply offering to replace the faulty video if I would send mine in. A new tape arrived in due course and at our June meeting, happily announced that we would screen the rest of the movie. Wrong!!! The new tape was all there <u>but</u> recorded at half speed which AMP can't play!

However, thanks to the kindness of our good friend Vern Taylor (what would we do without him?), we now have a tape of the full movie at normal speed and, hopefully, we will screen this at our October meeting.

To be continued...

BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY & GALLERY OF WASHINGTON STATE ENTERTAINMENT

902 Commerce Street
Tacoma Washington 98402

(206) 627 2947

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 216
Tacoma, WA 9840

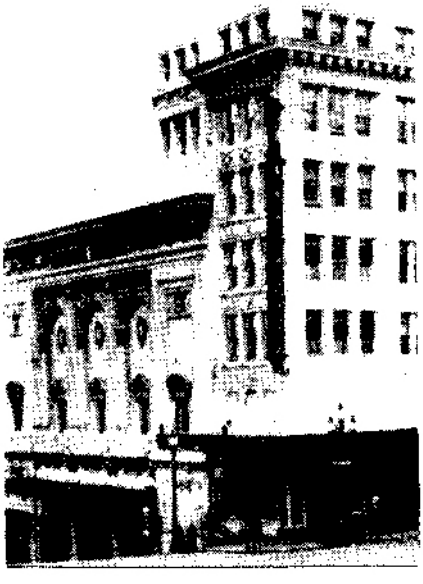
(The Bing Crosby Historical Society has a new mailer. This is the front cover. Over the next two pages you can see the contents. A very professional effort.)

BING CROSBY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Bing Crosby Historical Society was organized in 1977 to focus on the art and life of Bing Crosby because of his historical value to the State of Washington. The Crosby family was deeply involved in the settlement and history of the Pacific Northwest.

Nothing is more proper and fitting than to create in Tacoma a living memorial to Bing Crosby, the man, the entertainer and the artist. Tacoma has no more famous native son than the golden voiced Irishman whose recorded voice was heard somewhere in the world 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

The Society's office and gallery is currently in the Pantages Building at the corner of Ninth and Commerce Street in Downtown Tacoma. The Pantages Centre is the performing arts theatre serving Pierce County and Western Washington.



Acquisition of the Bing Crosby birthplace, which stands in a quiet residential area of Tacoma, is one of the goals of the Bing Crosby Historical Society. The house is privately owned and is in good repair. When it becomes available for purchase the Society will move to acquire it.

A plaque is affixed to the concrete stairs at the front of the old Crosby home, indicating that this is the *"BIRTHPLACE OF HARRY LILLIS 'BING' CROSBY, MAY 2, 1904... PLACED BY THE SONS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION"*. The Sons of the American Revolution were nearly correct; however, the actual birthday of Bing Crosby was May 3, 1903.

Bing and his family lived in the home on "J" Street until Bing was three years old; when they moved to Spokane, Washington. Bing was a high-spirited youth, who whistled everywhere he went, and exhibited musical talent and good humor with friends and neighbors. At one point in his life he found himself choosing between the life of a lawyer, or that of a singer/musician. Fortunately for all of his fans, he chose the latter, and became one of the world's most beloved Show Business Personalities.

WASHINGTON STATE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

A Centennial Project of the
Bing Crosby
Historical Society

Since the beginning of time people have developed various means to entertain themselves. Whereas early forms of entertainment were localized and family or community oriented, the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have seen the development of a popular entertainment industry encompassing the world. This change is the combined result of improved transportation, technological innovation and an improved economy which allows more people to spend a portion of their earned income on entertainment. The popular entertainment industry competes with sporting events as a major leisure activity.

Washington State has played a major role in the development of this industry. In addition to producing a considerable number of major entertainers, one Seattle television station procured the use of video tape after Bing Crosby, another Washington native, used his financial resources to develop this medium. The sum total of Washington State's contribution to entertainment has caused the Bing Crosby Historical Society to assume the lead in planning and implementing projects related to the history of the entertainment industry in the State.

Washington State's entertainment heritage extends back to the time of statehood and continues to the present where people born here are making significant contributions throughout the profession. The purpose of the "Washington State Goes to Hollywood" project is to introduce people living in or visiting here of the State's role in the entertainment industry from 1889 to the present. To accomplish this end, a traveling exhibit of photographs, artifacts and video productions is being planned. This exhibit will travel throughout the State, following the statewide fair circuit with additional stops at schools and other public gatherings.

GALLERY OF WASHINGTON STATE ENTERTAINMENT

The Society's Centennial project will be the beginning of a permanent gallery of Washington State Entertainment. After the exhibit concludes its tour it will be permanently placed in Tacoma. Through this facility additional entertainment-related materials will be collected, preserved and exhibited. Research activity, rotating displays and hands on demonstrations will complete the program of the Gallery. When completed, it will help to promote tourism in the area and provide a place that statewide residents can enjoy. The Gallery of Washington State Entertainment; and the project, "Washington State goes to Hollywood" is fortunate to have among its endorsements: *THE WASHINGTON STATE GRANGE, Ray Hill, Master; MARCUS S. GASPARD, State Senator; JEAN GARDNER, Executive Mansion, Olympia, Washington; ART WANG, State Representative, 27th District; SNOHOMISH COUNTY CENTENNIAL COMMITTEE, Dave Cameron, Chair; EASTERN WASHINGTON STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, of Spokane, Glenn Mason, Director;* and many others who have expressed their support for the project.

THE
BING CROSBY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP	$10.00 per year
Contributor	$10.00-$50.00
Subscriber	50.00-100.00
Sponsor	100.00-500.00
Donor	500.00-1,000.00
Memorial	Over $1,000.00

All donations are tax deductible

Long Live the Wild and Crazy Crosby

Bing mingled with the gallery at the rain-delayed 1973 Crosby

The PGA tour has gotten the message.

It now concedes that the golf tournament held annually on the Monterey Peninsula this time of year still has the right to be called "The Crosby" by us Northern Californians, when we refer to past events.

Isn't that decent of those tour folks down in Jacksonville, Fla.?

Last year, in putting together the 1987 tour media guide, someone in Jacksonville callously eliminated any past reference to the Crosby, listing all winners of the popular winter event — as far back as 1937 — under the heading: "AT&T-Pebble Beach Pro-Am."

(Uh, thanks, Mr. Crosby. But don't let that door hit you in the pipe on the way out.)

The tour's gross *faux pas* — you can bet it was unappreciated by brothers Nathaniel and Harry Crosby, who remain on the board of the current event — has been corrected in the 1988 guide. The list of tournament winners now carries subheads, noting the Crosby legacy, and the AT&T designation is limited to the years 1986-87, as it should be.

It is good that the shameful oversight — if that's all it was — has been put straight. But that, of course, is no guarantee that next year some jerk won't try to kill off the Crosby again.

So, just to remind the tour boys, here are several reasons why they shouldn't mess up like that again.

They call it "The Crosby".

■ Because in 1937 at Rancho Santa Fe, it rained so hard for three days, some guys ended up shooting at ducks on a pond near the 18th green. And when the ducks flew away, they shot at Larry Crosby's hat. And when Sam Snead finally won the one-day, 18-hole event for all the marbles, $500, and saw a check coming, he said, "If you don't mind, Mr. Crosby, I'd rather have cash."

■ Because whenever anyone started the rumor that the tournament would leave Pebble Beach because of inclement weather, Bing responded, "Playing the tournament anywhere else would be like asking Sir Laurence Olivier to play Richard III in a bowling alley."

■ Because in 1948 Lloyd Mangrum won the tournament *and* put in solid nightly sessions at the Blue Ox and Biff's El Estero, two long ago niteries.

■ Because in 1951 Phil Harris sank a 40-foot putt for a birdie 2 and a net 1 at Pebble's 17th green to win the pro-am with partner Dutch Harrison, and said later, "How about that, Bing. Ain't this a helluva blow to clean living?"

■ Because in 1953, in a 50 mph gale, Ed (Porky) Oliver took a 16 on the famous, over the water 16th at Cypress Point. "After hitting into the ice plant, he hit six provisionals into the ocean. He abandoned the idea of reaching the green and played the first ball taking 14 chips to get out of the ice plant and to the green.

■ Because in 1955, eventual winner Dr. Cary Middlecoff, the golfing dentist, complained to Scottish golf pro Peter Hay that it was so windy, "we can't tee up the ball." To which Hay responded, "Show me in the rule book where you have to tee up the ball. Now get out there and play."

■ Because in 1958 Harris announced that he was playing out of "Jack Daniels Country Club," and Bob Hope christened Pebble Beach, "Alcatraz with grass."

■ Because in 1959, ABC's Jim McKay said, "And now here's Jack Lemmon, about to hit that all-important eighth shot."

■ Because in 1960, another year of Crosby weather, Johnny (Tarzan) Weissmuller, once the world's greatest swimmer, said, "I've never been so wet in my life."

■ Because in 1962 it snowed.

■ Because on the final day in 1964, Tony Lema went to Mass in the morning at the Carmel Mission, won the tournament in the afternoon and poured champagne that night.

■ Because in 1969, as the last putt went in at 18, thunder cracked and lightning flashed over Stillwater Cove.

■ Because in 1976 pro Dave Hill said, "You wait till the last two days, when the famateur) teams who are out of it start getting drunk and screwing off while you're trying to win the tournament. That's when it's a zoo."

■ Because in 1978, after Bing Crosby had died on a golf course in Spain, his son Nathaniel, at age 16, stepped in to carry on the Crosby tournament tradition.

■ Because in 1982 Jerry Pate aced the 16th at Cypress Point.

■ Because in 1985 Lee Trevino said, regarding Spyglass Hill, "They ought to hang the man who designed this course. Ray Charles could have done better."

Anyway, you get the idea. You do get the idea, don't you?

BOYS- YOU AIN'T HEARD NOTHIN' YET!

FOR decads, Europe has been swamped with American film musicals and comedies. The records of the Hollywood stars outsell even our native products. And now, television continues to be dominated by the US soap-opera industry.

But throughout all those decades, we were missing one vital element. We saw and heard the tinsel and glitter, but to Americans themselves, the true medium of entertainment was radio.

Now one man has brought that magic to Europe, and Limerick is the place to which he has come. Martin Byrnes reports for Limerick Echo

'Good evening, this is Steve Thompson with the Steve Thompson Radio Show'.

The voice is still quiet and American with a marbling of Limerick accent running through it. The time is 10.30 p.m. on Sunday night and the station is Radio Luimni, Limerick's remaining medium wave pirate station.

Seated at the console, a little nervous perhaps, in the gentle frame of semi-retired electrician, Steve Thompson, lately returned from a quarter of a century in America. On the reel-to-reel tape deck is a recording of a Philco radio show which had been broadcast coast-to-coast in America in 1963. The stars are Bing Crosby, Al Jolson and John Charles Thomas. Steve Thompson makes a little mistake by introducing the show as Kraft Music Hall, and the hilarious piece of vintage radio is left rip.

The mistake is easily rectified - and easily understood. Crosby had hosted the Kraft Music Hall. Crosby had begun selling cheese coast to coast in 1931. In 1937, the legenday John Scott Trotter was appointed musical director, and so remained for a quarter of a century.

In 1937 the great Danish funn man Victor Borge was introduced to America on that show.

Unruffled, Steve Thompson returns to the microphone after the programme has run through. It is now a couple of minutes after eleven. Now he has another show, this time vintage musical.

And so it goes on until after 1 a.m. The voices of the unmistakable announcer Ken Carpenter introducing Bob Hope, Perry Como, the Andrews Sisters, Fred Astaire, the young Dean Martin and the even younger Tony Bennett. And all over Limerick literally thousands of radios are tuned in. As television stations close down the audience grows. And as each week passes the audience base expands.

HOME OF MEMORIES

Steve Thompson is a large man with a shock of grey hair. His home near Castletroy is at once a museum for his 10,000 radio-show tapes and an equal number of records, and is a living, vibrant, pulsating pantheon, where the gods of three decades of American vintage radio live on in loving care.

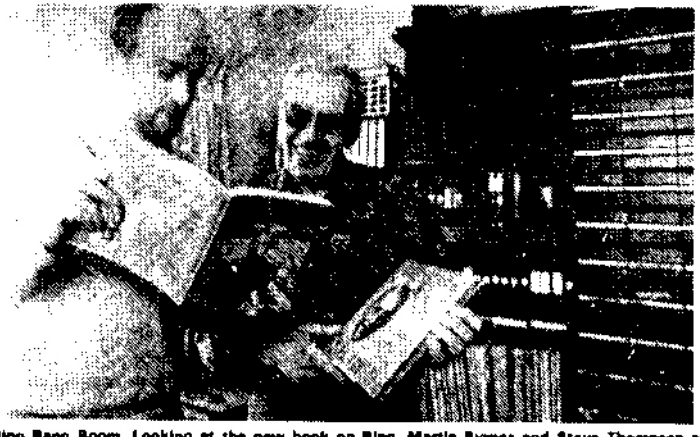
Born into Barrack Hill off O'Connell Avenue more years ago than he cares to remember, the Thompsons soon moved to 3, O'Dwyer's Villas. Even as a boy, Steve was mesmerised by the jollity of American radio. American Forces Network was clearly audible in Limerick from its transmitters in Germany. It contrasted dramatically with the stuffy and formal approach of the BBC and Radio Eireann.

One day a letter came from an uncle in America. This man, a trade union official, invited the young Steve to come west on a trial basis. Trained as an electrician he stayed and made the New World his home, and it took to him as easily. Moving around he taped off-air several hundred of the plays and variety shows which were the backbone of US radio.

America after the war was an exciting place to be. Optimism was everywhere, and this is reflected in the radio shows of the day.

Steve has some of the historic events of the years on tape. The famous Orson Welles broadcast of War of the Worlds which had an entire nation trembling in the belief that the Martians had landed was a Hallowe'en scare. Steve has an original copy, which he treasures. Some great plays, with many of the greatest actors of the day are there. The voice of Gordon Mac Rae was better known to American audiences through radio than through film.

No, it's not a curtain - that's a wall bristling with some of Steve's thousands of records.



Bing Bang Boom. Looking at the new book on Bing, Martin Byrnes and Steve Thompson at Steve's tape library room.

And none of these vintage shows have ever been heard in Europe over the airways.

I believe that my show on Raidio Luimni might well be unique in Europe', admits Steve, modestly.

Living now with his youthful American born wife, Collette, she shares her husband's enthusiasm for sound memorabilia. But she admits that her favourites are American video recordings of many of the musicals which they have also managed to acquire.

Their ultra-sophisticated video recorder and television can play any tape from any country.

'We love the old musicals', says Collette. 'They simply can't make them like that anymore'.

Collette keeps a home which is decorated with memories in remarkable taste. Music boxes, paintings, electronic gadgetry of all kinds.

Steve has only begun to catalogue his record collection a complete wall is jammed with four decades of fine music and speech. Upstairs are the tapes - many still in boxes unopened for lack of time. And, waiting in America to be shipped over are at least as many again.

Steve is grateful to John Frawley, owner of Raidio Luimni for giving him airtime for what Steve describes as the type of show that you could sit with your mother and listen to.

I asked him about whether he was interested in some of the BBC radio comedy shows which burst on the scene in the late 'fifties and early 'sixties. Shows like the Navyfark, The Goon Show, Beyond Our Ken/Round the Horne, and I.S.I.R.T.A. Steve admitted that he had not many, but that he would be interested in acquiring some. He would also be prepared to share his collection by transcription with genuine collectors. He may be contacted at Raidio Luimni through the usual post drops.

BING SINGS

As I spoke to Steve Thompson I had just finished reading a new book (which will be published in Ireland, Britain and America in a few weeks) entitled 'Bing, A Voice For All Seasons'. This book represents one of the most ambitious publishing undertakings ever for the Tralee-based Kerryman newspapers printing unit. The lavishly-illustrated softback tells of the entire life of Crosby, laying especial emphasis on his radio days.

Written by Irish-American Sheldon O'Connell (at one time the Gay Byrne of Canadian broadcasting) it also carries a complete discography, which includes 'fluffs' and non-released recordings, with numbers, locations and recording dates. Publisher Bryan Coynlham of The Kerryman seems to be the first to publish such an exhaustive list. The films are also treated in detail. But it is the almost maniacal devotion of the American audience to radio in Bing's heyday that caused me to remember that American life as it was lived was much closer on average to The Waltons than it could ever be to Dallas or Dynasty.

Steve Thompson will soon develop his Sunday night show to incorporate full-length radio plays (he has a one-hour pilot show this Sunday). By our calculation he should be able to keep the show going from his existing collection for just over 100 years.

The book, Bing, A Voice For All Seasons has not yet been priced for the Irish market by its promoter, Mick O'Toole of Printcomp in Dublin, but it will be available at good bookshops as an excellent gift for the Christmas market.

And what better time to release such a fine testimony to Crosby than in the season to which he added so much?

LIMERICK ECHO, SATURDAY NOVEMBER 3, 1984.

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TRADING POST

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DEREK C PARKES
66 Firs Road, Firsdown, Salisbury, U.K. SP5 1SW is especially interested in Bing's radio shows and would welcome hearing from anyone with a similar interest.

The contact may be especially beneficial as Derek can supply the following, post free in the UK:

1. CNP Crescendo CDs - Vols 1 & 2 of the radio years at £7.50 each (£7.85 surface mail to Australia). These CDs, imported from the USA contain all the material issued on the four PRT LP's.

2. The 'Bing in the 30s' LPs. Vols 1 - 3 on JSP plus many other items of interest.

3. The book 'Bing Crosby' by Timothy Morgereth at £24 (normal import price £30) - 554 pages. It contains:

a) An excellent 78 rpm discography
b) An filmography
c) An abbreviated TV listing
d) An excellent detailed listing of Bing's radio shows from 4 Jan 1928 to 30 May 1954.

4. 'The Crosby Years' by Ken Barnes (1 copy - new) £8.00

5. 'The one and only Bing' by Bob Thomas (1 copy - new) £8.00

Derek can also supply the new 4 LP series 'Personalities on Parade'
For additional information, please send 26p in stamps or two international reply coupons.

STEVE THOMPSON
13 Avignon, Milford Grange, Castleroy, Limerick, Ireland, has for sale copies of his tape catalogue 'The Golden Age of Entertainment' which consists of over 270 pages detailing some 900 cassettes available featuring old radio broadcasts from his collection.

Artists include Bing, Al Jolson, Frank Sinatra, Perry Como, Eddie Cantor, Jack Benny, Bob Hope, Burns and Allen, Edward G Robinson, Cary Grant, Peter Lorre, Charles Laughton, Hank Williams, John Wayne, Billie Holliday, Louis Armstrong, Harry James, Jelly Roll Morton, Kate Smith, Peggy Lee, Mario Lanza and many many others.

You can read about Steve and his collection elsewhere in the magazine.
Catalogue price, including postage, is £6.00 in Ireland and £7.00 the rest of the world.

LIFE

Goes to a Party

"Waikiki Wedding"

YOU BET quite wrong. This is not an Hawaiian volcano erupting. It is Martha Raye, proud possessor of the largest oral cavity between Hollywood Boulevard and the Antipodes, giving voice to her emotions.

Until you have heard Bing sing "Blue Hawaii" and "In a Little Hula Heaven" and given ear to Shirley Ross doing justice to "Sweet Is the Word for You", Life, as far as you're concerned, has been just another magazine...

FROM San Francisco's bridge-proud citizenry to Manhattan's sophisticates, the entire nation, including Vermont and Maine, voted Paramount's dude-ranch ribbing "Rhythm on the Range" most amusing picture of last spring. Stellar personalities who made it most amusing were Bing Crosby, Bob (Bazooka) Burns, Martha (Open Wider) Raye. Assembled again, this time amid grass lingerie and floral offerings of Pacific's pineapple archipelago, Hawaii, the same trio, plus velvet voiced Shirley Ross, top last year's vernal triumph with an hymeneal extravaganza of love, laughter and lyric languor (we cannot lei it on too thick)..."Waikiki Wedding".

"Waikiki Wedding" gets under lei as thousands of natives swing into five Hawaiian hit songs fresh from Hollywood.

By those native Hawaiian lyricists, Ralph Rainger and Leo Robin, authors of such native ditties as "June in January" and "Love in Bloom".

Watford, prominent authority on Pacific relations (he has thousands of 'em) demonstrates the hula, 1937 style.

Wedding March, Waikiki Style, as executed by those Hawaiian hula-billies, Martha Raye and Bob Burns.

Grass Widows at Wedding . . . No, just luscious to look at Shirley Ross and Martha Raye making hey hey the Hawaiian way with Messrs. Crosby and Burns.

JOURNAL PHOTO BY COOKIE SNYDER

Perry Como: The crooner is still mellow, honey-mellow and laid-back.

KING of the JUKES

By Jo Woestendiek
JOURNAL REPORTER

ADVANCE — Listen, all you young twerps who have had your ears deafened by rock 'n' roll and your brains and hearts numbed with insensitive lyrics: Perry Como, the laid-back crooner who mesmerized us bobby-soxers back in the '40s is in town.

And he could teach you a few things.

I'm talking here about music that tells about love — the sentimental, old-fashioned, forever kind. "'Til the End of Time" and "Let's Plan a Life Together" kind of love, sung against a background of sweet music. Not "Mama's little baby likes fear and torture. . ." sung to a background of squeaks and squawks.

"As long as there is a spring, a bird to sing, I'll go on loving you," he sang in "'Til the End of Time," and more than 3 million people bought that record.

Como, you see, didn't just sing songs, he made them. Some he even brought back from oblivion, such as "If You Were the Only Girl in the World," and "Prisoner of

Love." And who could forget "Hot Diggity," "Catch a Falling Star" and "Temptation"?

You, my rock 'n' roll friend, had some impertinent questions for me to consider when I interviewed the man known as the "King of the Jukes" Friday at The Crosby.

First: Do the crooners of the '40s become the droners of the '80s?

May your daughter grow up to marry a member of Motley Crue. The answer is a screaming "No!"

Como is still a crooner. He can still send a chill up any woman's spine and melt off her bobby sox — er, uh, her support stockings.

And for your second rude question, "If he was mellow in his 30s, how laid-back can he be in his 70s?"

He's still mellow, my friend, honey-mellow, and as low-key and relaxed as a dishrag.

His black, black hair is now almost white-gray. The crinkles around his eyes cut a little deeper. His chin is not as firm. His stomach is flat. His dark, dark, dark eyes still manage to look constantly amused.

After making an appearance at the golf course, he went to the Tanglewood Park concert shell to rehearse for the clambake concert. Before he went on, he took a few minutes to tell how he felt about the music of the '80s and to talk about some of the charities he works with.

Today's kids, he said, should at least get a chance to hear the music of the '40s and the '50s.

They have every right, he said, to like the kind of music they like, "but they should be abla to hear the other kinds."

"I love good music," he said. "And I don't understand today's record business. Maybe if I cut my hair short and painted it orange, I could understand it."

When he left home last week, he said, he had 13 grandchildren — at last count. "And they like the music of the '80s, but, then, they don't really *listen* to it."

Como is still in demand as a singer. He just finished making a record, called "You Are the Wind Beneath My Wings." It is his kind of song, the kind "you could sing to your wife or your mother," he said.

He hummed a little before he picked up the words: "You were content to let me shine. You always walked two steps behind."

It will come out in July, if NOW doesn't have it banned.

The singer celebrated his 74th birthday last Monday at Durham, where he was participating in the Children's Duke Classic for the 14th year. That tournament benefits the children's hospital at the Duke Medical Center.

They gave him a birthday present that made him very happy, he said. They named a wing of the hospital for him and his wife. It will be called "The Roselle and Perry Como Wing."

"I'm so proud of that," he said. He enjoys visiting the hospital, he said, and watching the children. "They're just beautiful."

He begins a nationwide singing tour this month, and in August will begin rehearsals for the annual Perry Como Christmas Show.

Yesterday at the Bermuda Run golf course, he teed off early in the morning for a round of golf with Kathryn Crosby.

The Crosbys are special to him, he said. When he was growing up in Canonsburg, Pa., on what is now known as Perry Como Avenue, but was then Third Avenue, he would play the records of Bing Crosby and try to sing — just like Bing.

It took him several years, he said, to realize that he would never make it as another Bing Crosby.

"There's no such thing as a good second."

He was about 25 years old, he said, when he began to develop his own mellow, laid-back style. And it worked.

That was after he began singing to the helpless customers in his barber's chair, and it was before he gave his first nightclub performance that inspired a critic to say, "The Como voice is considered by many, including Rudy Vallee, the king of crooners, to be the best in the field of cafe serenaders."

It was also long before his movie, *If I'm Lucky*, and his popular 1955 TV variety show, which always opened with "Dream Along With Me, I'm On My Way to a Star," and — more recently — his annual TV Christmas specials.

His schedule is not as busy as it once was, and he has time now to do some of the things he dearly loves to do, he said.

He likes to go to his summer home in Saluda (near Asheville) and watch the deer, the foxes and the birds. And he likes to get on a small commercial plane and fly from Asheville to Charlotte, back and forth, admiring the landscape that looks like a quilt of green in the spring and a quilt of many colors in the fall.

He does that so much, he said, that the pilots think he's crazy.

Way back in 1947, Como told an newspaper reporter that he would rather play golf than sing. Is that still true?

"I'm not sure anymore," he said. "My golf is getting a little tired."

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COLLECTORS' CORNER

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THE ACE OF HEARTS SERIES

Back in the 1960's, Decca in the U.K. issued a great series of LPs under the 'Ace of Hearts' label. (There was also an 'Ace of Clubs' series - anyone know about Diamonds and Hearts?)

Getting back to the topic, There were around a dozen Ace of Hearts Crosby compilations and the majority brought together for the first time on LP tracks that had only ever previously existed on 78 or in one particular case, has never been issued.

Such a case is the LP opposite entitled RARE STYLE which featured six unissued tracks and six very hard to find tracks.

Previously unissued were:
Let me look at you,
Fatherly advice, Lost in loveliness, Liza, More than you know and You are too Beautiful.

On side 2 were:
Something in common, Look to your heart, Suddenly there's a valley,
The longest walk, Sailing down the Chesapeake Bay and The possibility's there.

Note the similarity in cover photos. At a rough guess, I'd say that both were taken as publicity shots for THE EMPEROR WALTZ in the late 1940's. Surprising that both were used by the one label!

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COLLECTORS' CORNER

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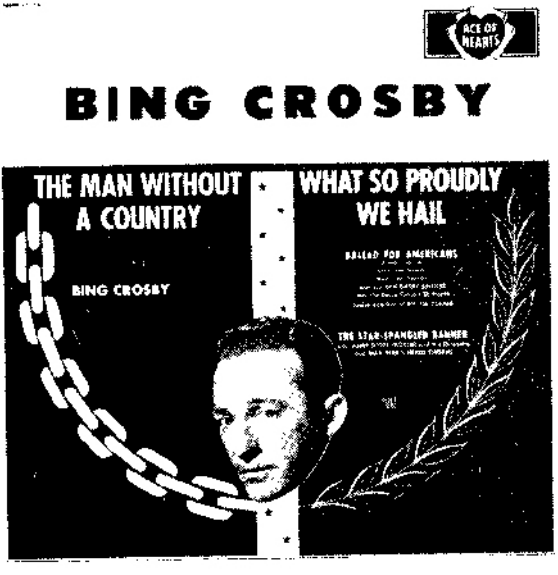
AMONG MY SOUVENIRS looks like an excuse to string together a dozen unrelated Crosby tracks (we're not complaining!) under the guise of a tribute to the "Grand Old Man of Tin Pan Alley" (UK version) - Lawrence Wright - a music publisher who first opened for business in London's Denmark Street back in 1911. A nice collection that includes DOES YOUR HEART BEAT FOR ME and MR GALLAGHER & MR SHEAN (alt. take).

BING SINGS FOR CHILDREN is not the same as the Austalian issue of the same title. In fact it actually includes the PENNIES FROM HEAVEN MEDLEY featuring Louis Armstrong and Connie Boswell! Wonder what little kids (and their parents) made of that!

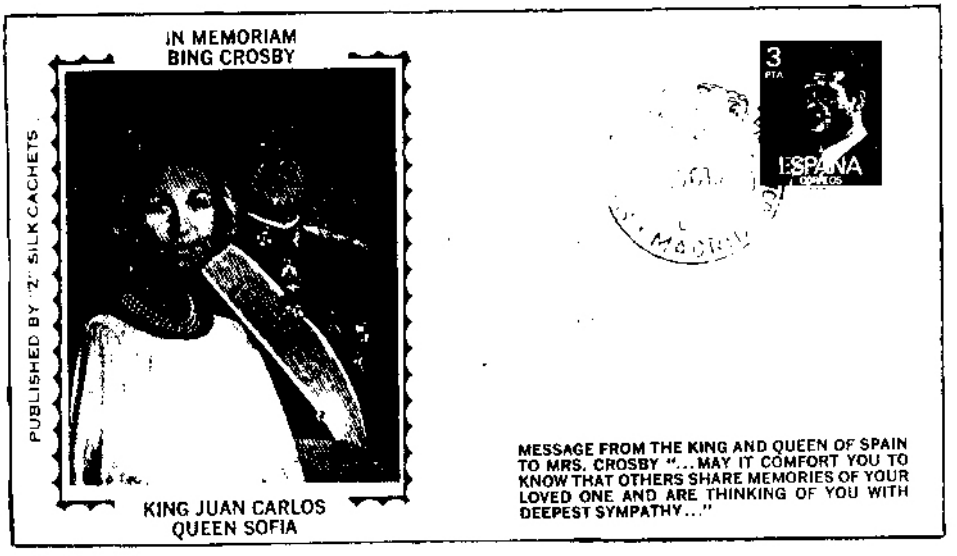


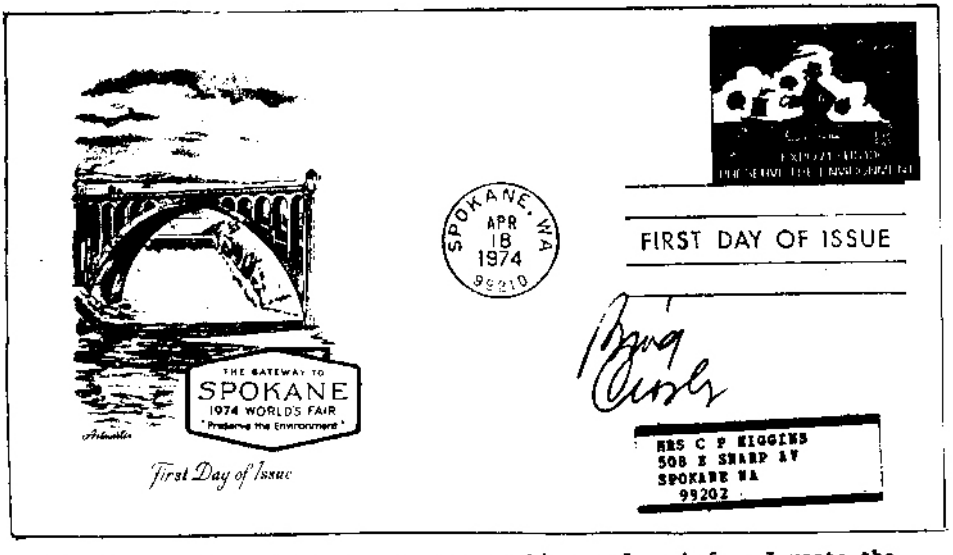
THE MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY and WHAT SO PROUDLY WE HAIL were a couple of flagwavers from around World War II which you wouldn't expect to be issued on LP in the UK but which were nice to have in this more permanent form.

For good measure, the disc also include's Bing's 1939 recording of THE STAR-SPANGLED BANNER for which he was in wonderful voice. Pity that they didn't include the companion side GOD BLESS AMERICA which I've always thought was as good as Kate Smiths.

COLLECTORS' CORNER

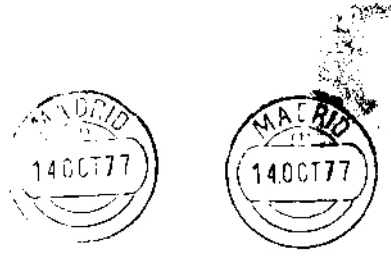
After Bing died in 1977, there were a number of memorial envelope covers issued. Several years ago, I printed a number of these in the magazine. Here are four more.





(Obviously I didn't look at the date on this envelope before I wrote the introduction!!! Note the year and also Bing's signature!)

COLLECTORS' CORNER



BING CROSBY
IN MEMORIAM

Harry Lillis Crosby was born on May 2, 1904 in Tacoma, Washington and died this day of a heart attack while playing golf in Madrid, Spain.

VERN TAYLOR WRITES OF THE ABOVE: Recently I received the enclosed rather odd and rare photograph of Bing with a singing group. The date is late 1947 or early 1948. The place - Bellarmine Preparatory School, Santa Clara, California. Occasion: A benefit show at the school with parents and friends in attendance.

One of the parents (Bing) is pictured with a quartet singing "Wait Til the Sun Shines Nellie". The quartet's name was "The Whatchamacallits". (Left to right: Al Weymar, Smoky Sailing, Len Veteran, Bing, Norm Hollingsworth.

The picture should be credited to the S.P.E.B.S.Q.S.A. (Society For The Preservation And Encouragement Of Barber Shop Singing in America)!!!

BING'S SERMONS

Bing on the 1955 Academy Awards presentation

"You know, not too long ago, the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences had a big show on the national TV hookup. This affair ran about an hour and a half and it was built around an on-the-spot announcement of the pictures, the actors, the actresses and technicians who had been nominated for Academy Awards.

Well sir, I was amazed, I might even say **shocked by the spate** of critical abuse which followed this program. Spate? I think it might better be described as a veritable torrent of vilification and fault-finding which broke out on all sides, even from some of the local newspaper and magazine columnists and some of the correspondents.

Now I don't think that there was anything wrong with the show, I really don't. I rather attribute this attitude to the fact that they were expecting too much, these fellas. They were expecting too much in the way of entertainment, that is. See, this show wasn't contrived to be entertaining. It was conceived for or less in the spirit of a documentary. It was a piece of reporting. And if any of these columnists, particularly the ones in the East, now if they think that reporting events from Hollywood is uninteresting to the American public, well they better just take a little swing out through the grass roots, out through the hinterlands of these United States, and I feel sure they'll find out a little differently.

Even though the event was not conceived by the Academy heads as an entertainment gala, there were some items in the show which must have been entertaining, I believe. You know, clips from the leading films which were nominated and some nostalgic clips from old films, and those things never fail to interest, entertain and amuse people.

I thought that Jack Webb was an urbane, articulate master of ceremonies; Humphrey Bogart was poised and amusing; the ladies all looked beautiful; the technical work was excellent. You know, it's pretty tough switching cameras back and forth between five or six different points without a split.

I know it almost **kills** me to say it, rather cut out my tongue, but Bob Hope came on at the end of the show and he was very jolly. He evoked many chuckles from the group at my home who were looking at the show, and I'm sure from the audiences all over the United States. And incidentally, the group in my home were mostly non-Show Business people from out of town. I'm certain their interest never wained for the entire 1½ hours. I thought that Mike Romanoff was very polished. I think he should have won some kind of an award for the outstanding performance on this show. He was very unctuous, very bland.

And something else, if you want to get into statistics, the figures released by Trendex, which is an audience gauge by which the advertising agency and television people rely implicitly, indicate that the show opened with a figure of nearly 27% of the listening audience and before the show was over, it had jumped up to 35½% percent. So you see, people weren't flipping the show off and looking elsewhere for entertainment while it was on. That's a privilege to which any of the reviewers or the columnists who blasted the proceedings also had access. So they could have turned it off if they didn't like it.

There was one fella, he really burned me, a San Francisco scrivener I believe it was; I saw his column and he took a big slash at Judy Garland. He said she was too fat. Well, Judy's got a pretty good clinical excuse for this condition. She's expecting a **baby** in a couple of weeks! If she'd been sensitive about this and taken advantage of it and stayed home, I suppose he would have blasted her for not going to the affair!

I don't want to get into any kind of a controversy here about these columnists, these newspaper and magazine people, I read them all the time and I think they do a wonderful job. But really I think they're getting a little picky when they attack this show in such virulent terms. After all, the thing is free, it doesn't cost audiences anything. The people who sponsored the affair were apparently pleased, and it was really the first experiment with such type of telecast.

I think these writers could have been a little more mellow in their attitude towards the whole thing, don't you? I suppose that maybe the fact that I was lucky enough to be one of the nominees makes me mellow.
Could be."

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BACK PAGE SPECIAL OUR TREASURER KEITH DORMAN IS 50! HAPPY BIRTHDAY KEITH

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A fitting note on which to end this issue
See you later!
Bob